PROGRESSIVE LABOR MAGAZINE

PL

Winter 1981-82
Vol. 14, No. 3
75¢

Fight Back, Not Givebacks!

nployes Won't Buy It or Take Cut in Pay

By Robert L. Simison

Ford Closes Dutch Plant

AMSTERDAM, Nov. 24 (AP)

plans to its pilots

Union Ma

By JOHN HOL

Special to The New York

ROMULUS, Mich., Dec. 17

ders at the American Moto

G.M. to Off 37,500

DETROIT, Dec. 17 (UP

General Motors Corporati

beiging inventories and

sales, said today that it wo

rarily lay off 37,500 works

assembly plants acro

The auto maker

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NGTON, Tex., Nov. 24 (

The General Motors Corpora

aid that it would reduce productio

s Arlington assembly plant to 4

n hour, from 58, and lay off 900

Kaiser

company profitable. "I th

PHILLIP

United Steelw

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In Wo il Situation

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An explosion in meat prices once again
s boosting food inflation toward the
louble-digit level while signaling a fur-
her erosion in the U. S. standard of eat-
ng. During the first half of 1981, co
umer food prices rose an average
nly 1.5%, and prices of many vital fo

Special to

LOS ANGE
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among its
Weste

Times are going to get tougher for public
nployees as the Reagan Administra-
n budget cuts begin to bite at the state
l local levels. Union leaders and pub-
officials predict more and more fur-
ths of state and local employees,
cially in the depressed Midwest.
will lead to increasingly difficu

creases. Adds Cameron: "One of the f
lacies of Reaganomics is that states w

LATEST AUTO SALES

OFF 22.5%

Money Funds Assets Drop

For the first time in 30 weeks, ass
of the nation's money market mut
funds have declined, Donoghu
Money Fund Report said yesterday.
The drop — $1.056 billion during
past week — put the assets of the
funds at $184.2 billion.
As interest rates have fallen in
cent weeks, the yields of the mo
market funds have also dropped,

Chicago Ba
Raises Prim

CHICAGO, Dec. 17 (AP) — The
tinental Illinois National Bank a
Trust Company, the nation's seventh-
largest commercial bank, raised its
prime lending rate today to 15¾ per-
cent, the industrywide level.
Continental Illinois was one of two
banks that had lowered their prime

ns that Inventori
ving top-h

re keeping a w
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Period Left,
Years

e airlines

it be-
very few with strong enough
to sustain such a program.
Financing with straight
quipment-trust certifica
ore difficult as
heir debt

Deficits Defer
By Reagan Adv

Continued From First Business Page

within the Administration. Some
seemed to suggest differences, of em-
phasis if not belief, within the Council
of Economic Advisers.
Jerry L. Jordan, the monetarist who
is the council's forecaster, opened his
remarks with a serious joke about dif-
ferences between him and the Treas-
ury's forecaster, Beryl W. Sprinkel,
the Under Secretary for Monetary Af-
fairs. "Beryl is in Paris so I'm free to
say what I want without being contra-
dicted," Mr. Jordan said, to laughter.
A touch defiantly, Mr. Jordan told
his colleagues — twice — that interest
rates would continue their recent
downward trend. He did not have to
add that declining interest rates in the
teeth of a growing Federal deficit
would seem to contradict conventional
economic logic. The audience under-
stood that he was asserting a doctrine
of the new, monetarist economics —
that interest rates are determined es-
sentially by the inflation rate.

Cooper-
To Seek Prot
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By a Wall Street J
MORRISTOWN,
Inc. a financially

Dip
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By The Associated Press

Livestock and meat prices jumped
sharply and some grain prices fell yes-
terday in response to a Government
report declining pork produc-
tion.
On
Chang

Cas
EDNESDAY, DECE 981

FOODS	Wed.	Tue.
Chi. lb.	1.47	1.47
lb.	.4350	.4315
lb.	.75	.75
	11.40	11.40

sharply

wn from 5.6660; 1.7780 Swiss fran
own from 1.8033; 214.98 Japan
yen, down from 217.37, and 1.1
Canadian dollars, down from 1.1830.
Gold began the trading day by risi

Cutbacks that could undercut the economy

yen, down from Friday'
en. Tokyo markets were close
oliday on Monday. The sell-of
continued in Europe with the repor
that the American Consumer Pric
Index rose by four-tenths of 1 percer
in October, the lowest increase sinc
July 1980.
At the same time, the prime lending

Economist Aubrey H. Zaffuto,
Schroeder Capital Management I
warns that a major prop to econo
growth is weakening steadily. "T
year," she predicts, "state and lo
spending is likely to decline almost
after adjustment for
Silver bullion slipped to $8.105 a t
ounce in London from $8.125, but la

U.A.W. Switch on Revising Contract Reflects Growing Concern for Jobs

By Douglas R. Sease
And Robert L. Simison
Staff Reporters of The Wall Street Journal

DETROIT — Suddenly the United Auto Workers union is preparing to begin renego-tiations of 50%

and-file's unwillingness to entertain the no-tion of making any concessions to two of the nation's largest corporations.

But in the last few weeks, as the nation's economy has worsened and layoffs among

GM and Ford, however, maintain such efforts aren't enough. "That $8-an-h gap is too large to close by coming to w earlier or working harder," says GM's Warren. To become competitive, the

Orange Juice Prices Up

By The Associated Press

Forecasts of a damaging freeze in Florida citrus groves this weekend sent orange juice futures prices soar-ing yesterday.

On the New York Cotton Exchange, all contracts for frozen concentrated orange juice rose by the 5-cent daily

Cash Prices

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1981

FOODS	Thu.
Buffer AA Chi. lb.	1.47
Broilers Dressed s NY lb.	.4284
Eggs large white NY lb.	.75
Flour Minn.-nor. bulk-carlots/cwt.	11.50

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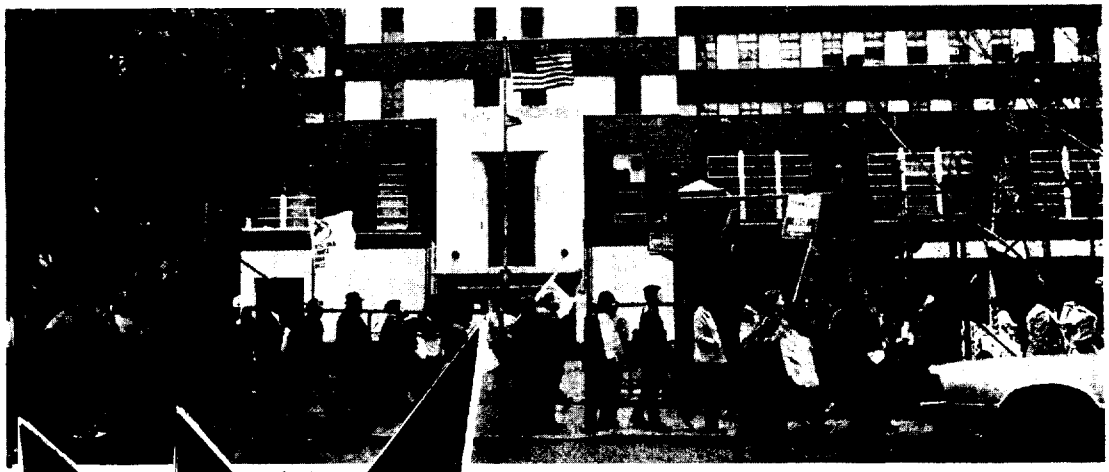

Every week, *Challenge-Desafío* brings you news of workers in struggle for socialism and against racism on the job, in the schools and neighborhoods, here and around the world. *Challenge-Desafío* strives to present the unconditional truth of class struggle, so our class can learn from experience how to win.

'Dogfight to Go to War

of striking air traffic controllers are hardly about to lose too much over Allen's petty "moonlighting."

The real issue lies elsewhere, and despite the trappings of farce, its implications are deadly serious for workers all over the world.

A month ago, Reagan said he thought the U.S. could win a "limited" nuclear war in Europe. As *Challenge-Desafío* pointed out at the time, he meant a war in which nuclear bombs might obliterate Western European countries but would not fall on the U.S. As one might expect, this statement was not greeted with open arms by the political spokespersons for European capitalists, who, as it is, already drifting away from the U.S. imperialist orbit.

(continued on page 2)

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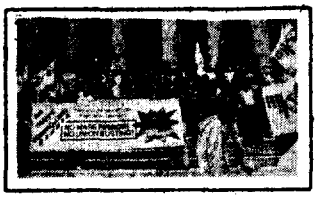

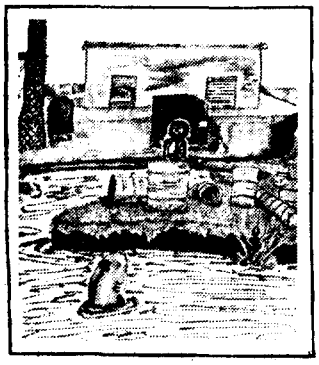

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Capitalist Crisis Means World War 4
As the U.S. and Soviet bosses grind closer and closer to nuclear war, one fact stands out clearly – only the working class, united behind communist leadership, can end world wars and make a revolution.

Rebuild the World Communist Movement 7
The old world communist movement has been dead for some years. Two PL international conferences marked a major step in uniting revolutionaries around the world to build a new one.

Fight Back or Give Back 10
As capitalism's crisis deepens in the U.S., the bosses and their labor lieutenants have a plan – givebacks, wage cuts and phony "worker ownership." We have a plan, too – fightback and revolution.

U.S. Rulers' Alliances Crumble 16
Since World War II, the U.S. bosses have relied on their European allies, especially Germany, to carry their banner. Now, under the pressure of U.S. decline and growing Soviet imperialism, the "emperor" has no more friends.

U.S., Soviet Bosses Fight over Poland 20
In an orgy of hypocrisy, U.S. bosses "defending democracy" and Soviet imperialists "preserving socialism" stand behind the contending fascist factions in Poland. What Polish workers really need is revolution.

European Bosses Take Some Losses 24
The pressures of intensifying U.S.-Soviet inter-imperialist rivalry have left some cripples on the battlefield, including the economies of Europe, which will be increasingly forced to shelter under the wing of the Soviet Union.

The Battle of Silver-Fin Lake 28
Where do bad ideas come from? Are we responsible for them? How can we destroy them? These are some of the ideas explored in this short story, originally written for teenagers, and developed through collective discussion.

The articles appearing in PL Magazine are published because the Editorial Board believes they are generally useful in the ideological development of the international revolutionary communist movement. Only the editorial and PLP National Committee documents represent the official policies of the Party.

notes and comment

We welcome letters and comments from our readers on articles in the magazine and on related topics. Please address all letters and articles to:

PL-PROGRESSIVE LABOR MAGAZINE
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On the Reversal of Socialism in China

A reader has pointed out to us that in the article *What Causes Social Change?* which was published in the **Soviet Capitalism** issue (Spring 1981 – Vol. 14, No. 1) there is a section which differs from our Party's analysis of events in China. Since the article was prepared by the Soviet Studies Project of the PLP International Committee, we feel it is important to clarify the situation.

In *What Causes Social Change?* (p.24) says "When China was socialist (until the early 1970s), China had a more advanced social system than the U.S. The material standard of living in the U.S. was much higher, of course, but in the U.S. there was brutal exploitation and all that goes with it – racism, sexism, nationalism, decadent culture, dog-eat-dog competition, etc. In China, where workers were in control, life was fundamentally better than in the U.S."

Road to Revolution III, one of our basic Party documents (published in *PL* Vol.8, No. 3 and available as a pamphlet – see last page of this issue) discusses the restoration of bourgeois rule in China, and points out that this took place much earlier. On page 16, the document discusses the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution [GPCR] in China, pointing out that:

"Like the Paris Commune, the Soviet Revolution and the first Chinese revolution, the principal question raised by the GPCR was the class nature of state power. By the early 60s, the ferocity of class struggle in China had begun to intensify dramatically. The concessions granted to the bourgeoisie by the policy of New Democracy had enablerd a new ruling class to emerge and gain ascendancy. It differed in form from the old ruling class, but its capitalist essence remained identical.

"The heart of this new ruling class was the party itself. In the space of a few short years, the Chinese Communist Party had turned into its opposite. Virtually all of its leading cadre had become a 'red' bourgeoisie. The GPCR therefore constituted an effort on the part of the masses to win power back from these revisionists."

An accompanying article in the same issue, *The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China* points out, on pages 37-39, that between 1949 and 1959, China was certainly under the rule of the proletariat, citing "...the destruction of the landlord class, the expropriation of the property of the bourgeoisie...and the destruction of petty bourgeois property and ideas among a peasantry which had launched the commune movement. The most important lesson of these years is that the poor and middle peasants can grasp Marxism-Leninism and fight for socialism and communism...A great Left force of workers and peasants had been created which was to re-appear strongly during the GPCR [Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution] in an attempt to resume the progress toward communism which had prevailed until 1959.

"...The question of who holds state power cannot be answered by examining only forms...nor by taking ideological pronouncements at face value...but only by determining *which class is transforming society in the direction of its own interests.* There are only two forms of stte power possible in the modern world: proletarian dictatorship or bourgeois dictatorship...In China between 1949 and 1959, the primary aspect of social change was in the direction of communism...No bourgeois dictatorship would have created the people's communes or free supply or removed the capitalists from much of their power..."

The article goes on to point out that figures for the period after 1959 showed that while the communes had originally abolished private plots of land, they were restored after that time, and played an increasingly large role in China's agriculture. Together with odd job income, they could account for as much as a quarter of the income of a rural family. At the same time, a large-scale *desocialization* of the communes took place between 1959 and 1962, with ownership of the commune's land being divided up among the individual production teams, bringing about a closer relationship between individual output and individual material reward. The article continues:

"The overall effect of these [new] regulations was to bring back the situation where the peasant's view was limited to producing for the immediate small group of which he was a part. The beginnings of any aspects of communist distribution and communist morality (working for the sake of a larger and larger collective) were reversed completely. Along with this the experiments in free supply of grain on a commune-wide scale were wound up and income differentials between teams reappeared with full force...

"These organizational changes were accompanied by an ideological campaign to justify the reversal of the original commune spirit. Private sideline occupations were said to be not only compatible with the collective economy but a necessary stimulus to it. Piece-rates, similar to those prevalent in industry, were encouraged as the best way to tie reward to effort."

Although the Chinese argued that this did not represent a move toward capitalism because the private lands could not be sold and collective labor still occupied the majority of a commune member's time, we can clearly see that the direction had been reversed. As the article points out, "Those who advocate the compatibility of private and collective tendencies, rather

notes and comment

than their fundamental contradiction, will end up *objectively* building bourgeois consciousness among the masses and creating the conditions, ideologically, for the restoration of capitalism. Any time the revolution ceases moving forward toward communism as its clear goal, it will immediately begin to turn around towards capitalism. *There is no middle position."*

On Nursing and Medical Care

To the Editors:

I've beeen reading some of the past issues of ***PL Magazine*** which I've gotten from a friend. I wanted to comment that I thought the cartoon you had on "How Capitalism Began" (Fall, 1980) and in the same issue, "Back to School: A Diary of Class Struggle" were effective alternative ways of explaining the effects of capitalism simply, and of a teacher's fights to raise others' consciousness. As a teacher in a state university myself, I found them to be useful and stimulating. I would suggest you consider those types of articles again.

Also, I wanted to just mention the Summer, 1980 issue on health. While I thought it was valuable in many respects, I note elements of sexism in the way the author addresses and analyzes women and nursing and the items on physicians. I intend to put my thoughts together in detail and send it to you but I wanted to indicate that now. Clearly, any hierarchy exists to carry an elitist, classist policy – this exists in both occupations – but you do not say that. Neither do you address the question of why nurses are even more susceptible to assuming power over each other – the sexism that has prevented them from having any power at at all in health care encourages them to just set themselves up over other nurses, especially LPN's, aides, etc. Furthermore, you need to question the technology of medicine (and you need to be certain to apply that only to doctors: medicine does not include nursing, physical therapy, etc. – it is only one part of health care) and not assume that it should just be applied to every health problem. Medicine is often crisis-oriented and dramatic in nature. It has taken that approach because it pays off for doctors, hospitals and insurance companies, e.g., the numbers of hysterectomies, tonsilectomies, and appendectomies done in the U.S. compared to European health care systems (not that they are not capitalist societies, but they have shown that less lethal, less surgical procedures are often warranted and better for the patients).

E.P.

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Revolution – The Only Solution

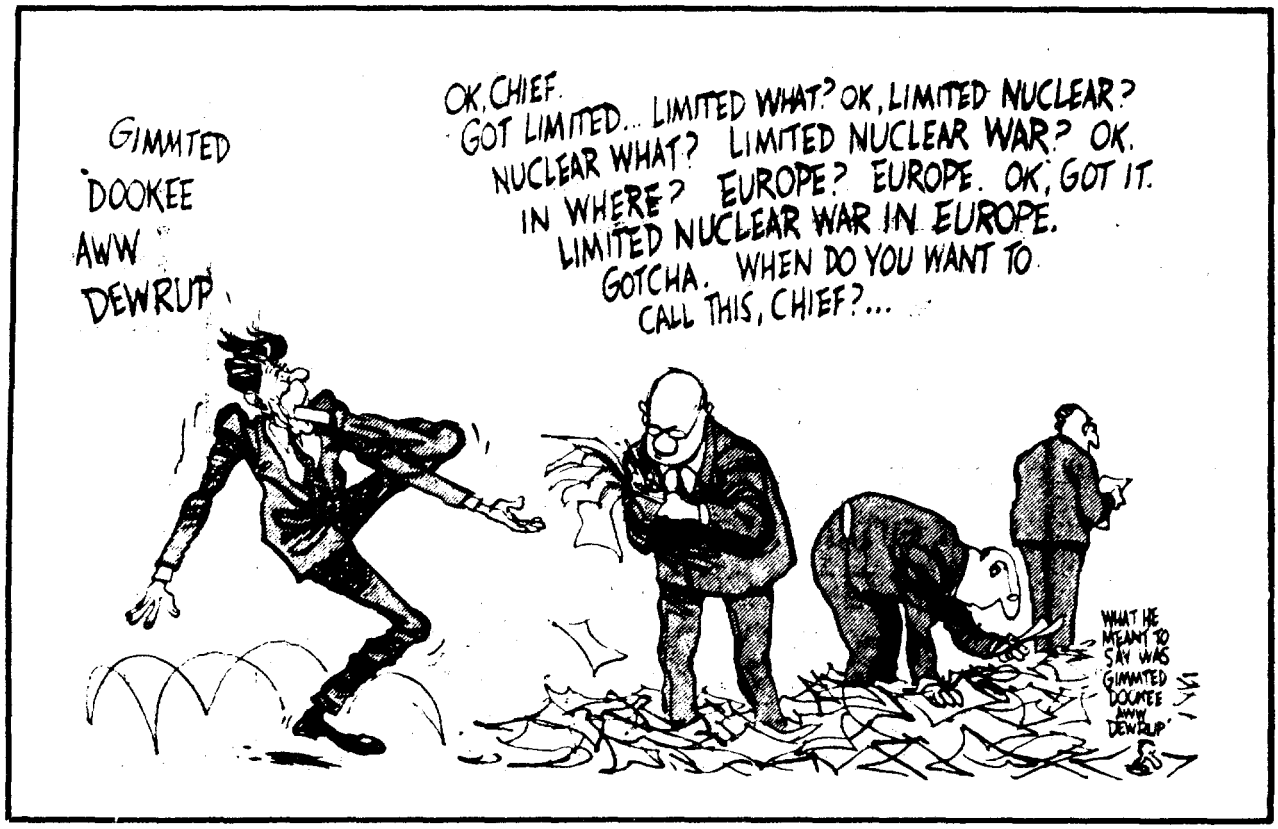
Capitalist Crisis Means World War

Capitalism is so deep into its death throes that the profit systems from Washington to Moscow are trying to obliterate any hope for the future. Their policies will result in dragging the international working class down with their sinking ships. In the past, it was believed that World War I was the "war to end all wars." By the end of WWII, the illusion that imperialism was a system that could lead to world peace was shattered. Now, on the eve of WWIII, many people are concerned that the next war will end all life.

Recent U.S. polls show that 68% of the population believe that war, nuclear or conventional, is imminent. This startling fact was buried by the media becuase, by and large, the rulers want it to appear that people are "going along with the program."

The antics of the Reagan administration confirm the worst fears of workers in the U.S. and the around the world. Between the numb-skull in the White House, the power-mad maniac in the State Department, and the bird brain in the Defense Department, they have managed to creat the image that the Three Stooges are in control. Their conduct of national and international affairs has reached world-wide comedic proportions. Mel Brooks is probably already writing a script using the material supplied by the Reagan frolics. Maybe it'll be caled "Blazing Assholes."

However, the situation is deadly serious. On the same day that Haig announced that the U.S. would be willing to explode a nuclear bomb in Europe to show the U.S.'s resolve against the Soviet menace, he also proclaimed that the U.S. imperialists are planning to invade either Cuba, Nicaragua or El Salvador. In other words, Haig gave the world "24 hours to get out."


GIMMITED
DOOKEE
AWW
DEWRUP
OK, CHIEF.
GOT LIMITED... LIMITED WHAT? OK, LIMITED NUCLEAR?
NUCLEAR WHAT? LIMITED NUCLEAR WAR? OK.
IN WHERE? EUROPE? EUROPE. OK, GOT IT.
LIMITED NUCLEAR WAR IN EUROPE.
GOTCHA. WHEN DO YOU WANT TO
CALL THIS, CHIEF?...
WHAT HE MEANT TO SAY WAS GIMMITED DOOKEE AWW DEWRUP

The deadly Washington trio has even succeeded in making the Moscow imperialist seem peaceful, skillful and rational. Reagan & Klan have made it quite clear that the U.S. has replaced detente with the outlook of nuclear superiority. And the war lords in Washington, via the Haig threat of a "little nuclear war" in Europe, khave revealed that the U.S. strategy is based on the concept of the first strike.

Naturally, the Soviet bosses had a field day with all of that. With tears in their eyes, various Soviet big wigs claimed that they would never launch a first strike. And, of course, they, with a trained eye on the peace movement weeping Europe, proclaimed the idiocy of nuclear war. It all sounded pretty good, until a Soviet sub armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons washed up on the shores of Sweden like a beached whale.

On other fronts, the policies of the U.S. chieftains are faring poorly, too. Defeats and setbacks from Europe to the Middle East are panicking them, driving them pell mell towards war. For example, the entire Middle East strategy of the U.S. bosses has gone down the tubes. The Camp David accords, the cornerstone of the U.S. policies in the region, have essentially broken down. This has resulted in an intensification of the problems in the region, reating the basis for war, Eqbal Ahmad, member of the Institute for Policy Studies, writing in the ***New York Times,*** (Nov.4), sums up what the world already knows. He says:

> Camp David was the product of Mr. Sadat's flawed vision, Mr. Begin's messianic territorial designs, and Jimmy Carter's eager complicity. Far from initiating a peace process, it augmented the arms race in the Middle East, worsened the plight of the people in the West Bank, Gaza, and Lebanon, isolated Egypt from its Arab milieu, and encouraged Israel to creat "new facts" in the occupied lands.

Currently, the U.S. bosses are flirting with the Saudi "peace" plan, which calls for Israel to give up all occupied territory, give the West Bank to the PLO, and make East Jerusalem the capital of the new PLO state. It also rejects Israel's claim to be a state. The Europeans have unabashedly grasped the Saudi plan – their need for Mid-East oil is overstepping any loyalty they have towards Israel. The European break with the Israelis is so sharp that Haig, ever the champion of tact, had to tell British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington to "cool it." Carrington was inn Saudi Arabia, being oiled up by the Saudis to accept their peace plan. The Saudi plan can only be successful if the Arabs invade and destroy Israel – the fascists in Tel-Aviv will never accept it peacefully.

Underlying the failure of U.S. policies in the Middle East is the illusion it was predicated on. The Reagan Klan came to office with the misconception that it could forge and anti-

CRISIS AND WAR

Soviet alliance between Israel and the moderate Arabs while relegating the bitter regional tensions to the background. For the past few months, Reagan and his clown prince Haig tried to patch this illusion together by awarding the Israelis, Egyptians, Jordanians and Saudis various diplomatic epaulets. All sorts of strategic relations were announced daily by the Reagan boobs to try to smooth the ruffled feathers of the parties involved. But the deadly duo's trend toward the Arabs and away from Israel is irreversible.

All imperialist roads are leading to war. We humbly accept the wisdom of the masses on this question. But more important, we reject the notion put forward by the bosses that the working class is too numb and too dumb to do anything about it. The times cry out for revolutionary leadership. The bosses of the world have proved that they are only capable of war abroad, and war on their workers at home in the guise of unemployment, racism and fascism. The capitalists are unfit to lead a dog sled.

It was revolutionary leadership, precisely our leadership, that launched the anti-Vietnam War movement. After the anti-war movement developed, ruling class forces took it over, using the notion that peace could be achieved by imperialism. Hasn't this proved to be the falsest notion ever? In order to attain peace, the workers of the world have to destroy imperialism. This can only be accomplished by building a revolutionary party and making revolution.

This is surely a better choice – the only choice, really – other than sitting around and waiting for the enevitable. Making revolution is our choice, and it is the goal that most frightens the bosses. Despite the bosses' apparent control of things, workers can assert themselves and lauch a vigorous counter-offensive. Every major war has heloped give rise to revolution. The Russian Revolution came out of WWI. The Chinese Revolution was a product of WWII. The only way there can be an end to war is by eliminating its cause. And there is no doubt that capitalism is the cause.

No matter which politician is in office, no matter which ruling class clique runs things, the conditions for war will exist as long as capitalism exists. The bosses make war to maintain their profits – this is the law of history. Workers make revolution to have a future – this is the main lesson of history. The revolutionary process will triumph because it can satisfy the aspirations of workers. Over and over again, the so-called numb, dumb working class has taken matters into its own hands and swept the ruling classes into the garbage bin of history. The next large movement in the U.S. may not simply be an anti-war movement. It can be a movement for revolution to turn WWIII into the even of socialist revolution!

PLP International Conferences

Build a New World Communist Movement!

The old world communist movement, once led by the then-socialist Soviet Union, and later by China, is dead at the hands of the new capitalists and imperialists who rule there. As a step to rebuilding that movement, PLP recently held two conferences of U.S. and international students and workers. Below are reports of those conferences.

Workers and students of nearly a dozen nationalities – El Salvador, Mexico, U.S., Pakistan, Iran, Great Britain, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Guatemala and Cuba – met in Los Angeles in December, following a similar weekend conference in New York, with 28 nationalities represented. The West Coast conference began with a plenary session with speeches in Spanish and English by a Mexican and a British immigrant, members of PLP. Both pointed out the imminence of nuclear war between the U.S. and Russian bosses, and the need for the international proletariat to turn that war into a revolutionary war to crush all the imperialists. It was noted that the war will be an imperialist war, fought for plunder of the world's markets, resources and workers – in spite of the waving of fought under the banners of anti-communism by the U.S. rulers and of "communism" by the Russian state capitalists. The task of our Party is to turn this war into a real battle of communism versus anti-communism, with the working class on the side of communism, and the Russian and U.S. rulers on the other side. To do that, workers must follow only a single road, that of fighting for a worker-run society – for socialism.

After the plenary, the conference divided into several workshops, where serious discussion and debate began on the question of the imminence of WWIII and on how to rebuild the international communist movement.

At noon, all the participants joined dozens of other members and friends of PLP and the International Committee Against Racism in a demonstration in downtown L.A. against the fascist deportations of Haitian and Salvadoran refugees and for the shutdown of the concentration camps these refugees and other undocumented immigrants are held in.

After this militant demonstration, the conference resumed. One comrade asked why the U.S. and Russian bosses couldn't come to some agreement and avoid a war, just as the U.S. and Chinese bosses, who used to be bitter enemies,

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Over the Thanksgiving weekend, workers and students from 28 different countries met to map out an international strategy to turn the coming imperialist war into a war to crush the imperialists with workers' revolution. This International Conference, organized by our Party, gathered workers and students from the U.S., Haiti, Iran, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Lebanon, Ghana, Nicaragua, Mexico, Jamaica, Trinidad-Tobago, Ecuador, Peru, Panama, Gambia, Nigeria, France, Italy, India, Bengladesh, Puerto Rico, Great Britain, Spain, China, Cuba, Morocco and the Philippines. The composition of the meeting itself reflected the multi-national and multi-racial characteristic of our Party.

The conference began with a speech by a member of PLP International Committee, who said that the main contradiction affecting events all over the world is the inter-imperialist rivalry for world hegemony and this rivalry will lead to a nuclear WWIII. He pointed out, therefore, that the working class needs to turn this contradiction into one between the international working class and its allies on the one side, and the world's imperialists and the other, and to turn WWIII into a revolutionary war for workers' power. To carry out that task, workers need one international fighting force, one revolutionary communist party that fights for the dictatorship of the working class all over the world. It was noted that this conference will be a big step towards that goal.

Then the participants divided into several workshops, where sharp political struggles took place over the question of whether an imperialist war is imminent or not, what strategy to take against WWIII and how to rebuild the International Communist Movement. One of the sharpest struggles was over the question of what line communists should take in the developing capitalist countries, such as Iran. It was argued that workers should fight for socialism – for the dictatorship of the proletariat – and not for people's democracy, as stu-

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West

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have done. Another comrade raised the point that there was more collusion against workers and liberation movements among the imperialists than collision among themselves. Others refuted that point, saying that China is not yet a superpower in the imperialist field, and that its contradictions are mainly with the Russians. Therefore, since the defeat of socialism there in the mid-60s, it has tried to build itself up by allying with the U.S. against the Russians. This alliance is not permanent, however, and might change anytime – it's shaky already, given Reagan's plans to sell new weapons to Taiwan – and turn into collision.

Since the Russians bosses are competing with the U.S. in every area of the world, from the Caribbean to the Mid-East, and are winning slowly but surely, the main aspect of the relation is that of collision. As a matter of fact, the main contradiction (that thing which shapes all others) in the world today is between the U.S. and Russian imperialists, and it is going to lead to world war. Any illusion that the imperialists will not go to war is very harmful since it builds pacifism among the masses and stops us from preparing for the eventual nuclear war. It was also stressed that because the revolutionary movement is not yet strong enough to crush the imperialists before they start their war, the only correct strategy for workers all over the world is to turn WWIII into its opposite, and turn the inter-imperialist contradiction into one between bosses and revolution.

Another argument was raised by some Iranian friends on the tactics of revolution in countries like Iran. They put forward the idea of "popular democratic revolution" as the road to socialism. But this implies that the workers must still complete the bourgeois revolution, without the bourgeoisie, which is quite a contradiction. The only revolution workers must complete is a workers' revolution. The ideas put forward by some of the Iranian comrades implies also that capitalism is not the predominant mode of production all over the world and that peasants are not mainly agricultural workers, but part of the petite-bourgeisie. A comrade from Mexico said in Mexico, as well as all over Central America, the trend is for peasants to become hired farmworkers, since the penetration of capitalism is reaching even the most remote Indian communities in Mexico.

Another strong point of discussion was the situation in El Salvador and Central America. The leadership of the movement that opposes U.S. imperialism and the fascist rulers of El Salvador and Guatemala does not offer a real alternative to the yoke of capitalist and imperialist exploitation, since it just opens the doors to other imperialists – Russia and West Germany. For a movement to be really anti-imperialist, it must oppose all imperialist powers and fight to crush capitalism, whatever form it takes.

This led to the discussion of the need to build a worldwide communist movement based on one strategic line, that of opposing all imperialists and of fighting for the dictatorship of the proletariat. PLP is trying to build that kind of movement, learning from the experiences of the Bolshevik Third International.

This led to the discussion of the need to build a worldwide communist movement based on one strategic line, that of opposing all imperialists and of fighting for the dictatorship of the proletariat. PLP is trying to build that kind of movement, learning from the contributions and errors of the Lenin- and Stalin-led Third International. Our party is trying build the embryo of that international communist movement by winning immigrant and U.S. workers and students to the idea of internationalism and ommmunism. One key way of doing so is through our press; therefore we must multiply the sale of ***Challenge-Desafío,*** and its French and Tagalog versions, here and abroad. Concrete plans were made to sell regularly at the border near San Diego, to reach the thousands of Mexican workers crossing the border every day. Each participant was urged to sell subs for our newspaper – and several dozens were sold during the conference – and to take bundles of ***C-D*** to sell.

On Sunday, reports were given from the workshops. Then a comrade from Mexico talked about how some comrades are trying to build a PLP fraction in that country, and concrete plans were made during the conference to strengthen that fraction, and publish a Mexican edition of***C-D.*** One farmworker from Delano spoke about the importance of selling ***C-D*** in a consistent way, telling how he and his young son sell 85 copies every week in hand-to-hand sales, engaging in political discussion about the ideas of the paper with the workers who buy it, and getting contributions beyond the 10¢ price.

After the speeches, the floor was open to comments and debate, arguing out the same points raised the day before. After the debate, several resolutions were presented and approved: build massively for May Day as a way of bringing out the ideas of worldwide workers' unity against the imperialist drive for WWIII; increase the sale of our publications, aim to translate our publications into Farsi (the language of Iran), and increase the sale of ***Hamon*** among Filipino workers on the West Coast; and step up the fight against fascist deportations because the concentration camps used against immigrants today will be used against all workers who fight against the bosses in the not too dis-

tant future.

The conference was ended with two speeches, one by a PLP factory worker (an organizer of this conference) who had just won his job back after a long fight against his boss, and by a member of the East Coast International Committee. The comrades stressed the need to build an international fight against capitalism and their plans for WWIII. One of the comrades said that the road to turn the coming war into a revolutionary war begins right now. It means that we must win workers, soldiers and students to communist ideas to prepare the basis for a mass revolutionary party with deep roots inside the mass movement. It means sending revolutionary organizers inside the Armed Forces, and rejecting the pacifist "Boycott the Draft" strategy of liberals and fake-leftists. That strategy is a loser because it isolates us from one key sector in the fight to crush imperialist war – those who will be forced to become cannon fodder for the imperialists, the soldiers, and who are in the best position to use their weapons against the warmakers. Once war starts, our job is to build for the revolutionary upsurge of workers, soldiers and students – when conditions are favorable for the defeat of the bosses. We have to guarantee that the revolution spreads all over, internationally if possible, carrying it forward without vacillation.

While revolution involves military preparations by the proletariat, it is mainly a political task. Thus, only a revolutionary communist party can lead rebellion towards its final victory: crushing the capitalist class. The conference ended singing *The Interntionale*, the workers' revolutionary anthem, in Spanish and English.

East

(continued from page 7)

dent supporters of the Iranian group Peykar maintained.

The workshops recessed for an hour to demonstrate and march in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn against the fascist attacks by the Reagan administration against Haitian and Salvadoran refugees. This march put into practice the internationalist solidarity discussed at the conference.

After the lunch break, the conference reconvened, taking up the questions of the fight for socialism now and rebuilding the international communist movement. One point put forward was that although PLP is right now a U.S.-based organization (with friends in several countries), the millions of immigrant workers and foreign students residing in the U.S. make our Party a multi-national party. As our Party grows in numbers among those workers and students, and as we are able to influence the class struggle, we have a greater possibility of winning workers and students in other countries to the idea of fighting for workers' power. Another point made was that immigrant workers and students in the U.S. have friends and relatives back home, and that if ***Challenge-Desafío*** (and its French, Tagalog and Arabic editions) are circulated in all those countries, our ideas will have greater impact. To that end, a number of international subscriptions were sold during the conference.

The conference maintained the necessity to fight against pacifism, a dangerous trend. Pacifism builds illusions among the masses that they can prevent the coming war by merely calling on the world's bosses to "stop the nuclear madness." War is the inevitable product of imperialism's search for maximum profits. Many "little" wars are taking place at this very moment and the only way to stop them and the bigger war to come is by crushing the imperialists. In the case of Europe, pacifism is being led by a section of the ruling class which prefers the Soviet imperialists to the U.S. imperialists.

After the workshops, an international dinner was served at the PLP center. The chairperson of PLP spoke to the assembled workers and students, highlighting the need for an international communist movement to lead the revolutionary struggle around the world, one powerful enough to crush the imperialists' war aspirations.

The conference convened again Sunday morning with a plenary. A red soldier, member of PLP, addressed the participants, tell ing about some of the experiences our comrades who are building a communist movement inside the imperialist armed forces have had, and our strategy for developing communist consciousness inside the imperialist Army. He was being transferred to West Germany the following day, which may well be the main battleground of the coming WWIII. Then a communist farmworker from Delano, Cal., talked about how, after he just arrived from Mexico, he met our Party through ***Desafío,*** and how his Party group now sells close to 500 copies of our press each week. Reports from the workshops were then given. Finally, the plenary was opened up, and many comrades spoke. All speeches were translated simulatenously into Spanish, French and English.

The conference closed with the singing of *The Internationale*, the working class anthem. Indeed, the international working class shall rise again and this time we will triumph against the capitalists rulers around the world, from Russia to the U.S.

U.S. Workers Must Choose:

Fight Back or Give Back

The antics of the Reagan administration have become a national joke. The "true confessions" by Reagan's budget director David Stockman have only confirmed what workers knew all along – "Reaganomics" is nothing more than a scheme to save the rich by soaking the working class. Unfortunately, mass unemployment is no laughing matter.

According to the government's "official" figures, 8.5 million workers were out of work in October 1981 – 8% of the workforce. But these figures do not count those who have been out of work so long that they have given up looking; nor five million part-timers who want full-time jobs but can't get them; nor young people seeking their first jobs – and still looking; nor youth who have given up looking and joined the army. If all these were added in, the *real* unemployment figure would be somewhere around 15 million.

In any event, this is the highest jobless total since 1939, the last year of the Great Depression. Then, 9.5 million were still out of work – 19% of a work force of 50 million – after *ten years* of mass unemployment! *That* depression was "solved" by World War II, which took 14,000,000 into the armed forces.

The current recession is counted as the 8th since the end of World War II, although the bosses' economy never really got out of the last recession 18 months ago. Their definition of "prosperity" is 3% to 4% unemployment; they consider 6% the mark of a recession. Yet there has been *at least* 6% unemployment for the last ten years – **a permanent recession.** How this has intensified the squeeze on the whole working class and caused a shortfall in funds for Social Security will be explained shortly.

By R.C.L.

While AFL-CIO and other union hacks arrange cutbacks and speedups to save the bosses' skins, PLP is organizing to end the recession and the capitalist system with revolution.

The current recession, however, has an added feature that makes it different from previous ones. Until the 1960's, the "classic" capitalist recession/depression combined a fall in prices along with a drop in employment. In the last two decades, mass unemployment has been accompanied by rampant inflation – a continual *rise* in prices. In this recession, we are experiencing not only inflation alongside mass unemployment, but also actual wage *cuts.*

Wage cuts occurred during the Great Depression of the 30s too, but prices also declined; there was no inflation. Now, workers have faced cuts of anywhere from 10% to 30% at GM, Goodyear, Pan Am, American Airlines, American Motors, Chrysler, and so on. One group in Alabama has been forced to take a 50% cut in wages and benefits!

This has come about through the "choice" set up by U.S. bosses: either take a sizable wage cut or the factory will be closed and you'll lose your job altogether, and in some cases your pension. This kind of "choice" – without any alternative leadership for workers – is driving the standard of living of the whole working class sharply downward. Already 265,000 auto workers, 60,000 steelworkers and 60,000 rubber workers have lost their jobs. For every auto job lost, two more are lost in related industries and among auto parts suppliers.

If that's the condition of the working class as a whole, consider what racism has done to black, Latin, Asian and Native American workers. The jobless rate given out for black workers is 16.7% – more than double that of white workers. But figuring in the unemployed who are not counted in "official" figures, the rate is probably close to 25%, especially considering the unemployment rate of 40% to 60% among black youth, most of them first-job seekers, in the big cities.

If the whole working class had a 25% jobless rate, out of a workforce of 100 million, 25 million workers would be on the streets, and the U.S. would be in a deep depression. So capitalism's shifting the burden of its economic problems onto the backs of workers, when combined with racism, means a depression *right now* for non-white workers – and none of this includes the even worse oppression of undocumented immigrant workers, who are paid less, toil in sweatshops and in the fields, and whose unemployment is not counted in any figures.

The racist attack on all these workers sets

up the whole working class for the same oppressive medicine. It not only divides – and therefore weakens – the working class, but it also allows the bosses to use the club of doubly-oppressed workers against white workers, threatening to displace the latter with the millions on the street if they don't "shape up" and accept wage-cuts, speed-up and union-busting.

Why is this squeeze occurring? First, U.S. bosses are locked in a sharp inter-imperialist rivalry with Russian bosses for control of markets and strategic military bases in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia. Ultimately, the only way imperiaists solve these conflicts is by war, through "client" states and eventually, a nuclear third world war. Preparations for this war require tremendous capital investment.

Second, the U.S. bosses are losing the competitive battle with even their "allies" in Japan and Western Europe, with these "friends" capturing markets formerly dominated by the U.S. in auto, steel, electronics, etc. As the U.S. bosses' production and marketing share go down, the European and Japanese bosses' profits go up. Since jobless U.S. workers can't produce profits for their bosses, taxes formerly paid by millions of these wage-earners are also lost, along with taxes no longer paid by the big corporations themselves when their profits sink.

For instance, there has been an average of 200,000 fewer auto workers employed per year over the past 10 years. If those workers averaged $20,000 a year, they would have paid approximately $5,000 a year in taxes, had they been employed. That's $1 billion per year in lost taxes, or $10 billion in ten years that the bosses couldn't collect for their war chest and/or state local services. Add to that at least $10 billion in lowered taxes for GM, Ford and Chrysler (based on lower profits) over these 10 years. Thus, even if some of those unemployed auto workers had found other jobs (at considerably lower pay) and paid some taxes, at least $15 billion was lost to government treasuries from this one industry alone.

One of the main ways the U.S. ruling class can make up these losses is by squeezing the working class here even more. With the U.S. battling the West Germans and Japanese, all three are seeking the lowest costs – the highest rates of exploitation – they can find. The latter two are now building plants in this country and getting concessions from unions like the UAW to be able to pay even less wages than the national auto contract calls for.

With less income going to state and local government treasuries, hundreds of government workers have been laid off (60,000 in NYC alone) and vital public services cut. In a depression state like Michigan, schools have closed, having "run out of money."

The higher rate of mass unemployment over the past decade has also affected Social Security. While many might think that the Reagan Klan is hiding something when the claim that Social Security funds will run dry if benefits aren't cut, the fact is that the anarchy and decline of U.S. capitalism has sharply reduced the amount paid into Social Security.

With an additional 3% unemployment over the past ten years (permanent recession), 3,000,000 more workers than "normal" have paid nothing into that fund, nor have the employers who laid them off paid *their* half share. Thirteen percent of an average annual wage of, say, $10,000, is $1300. Multiplied by 3,000,000 workers, that equals $3.9 billion *per year,* or $39 billion lost to Social Security over ten years! And that's only if there was an average of an extra 3% unemployment; it probably was closer to 4.5% "extra." Since the bosses refuse to make up that loss – caused by their profit system, they naturally want to take it out of the hides of the working class, either by cutting benefits or raising Social Security taxes or both. That's the nature of the (capitalist) beast.

Slowly but surely, and especially in auto, the unions are being broken.

Of course, labor is not the sole cost from which the bosses can try to make up their losses. The cost of energy and interest has spurred cutthroat competition within the ruling class. With sky-rocketing oil prices and climbing interest rates, the oil companies and banks have been pulling in huge profits at the expense of the owners of basic industry, as well as off the backs of the working class. This is all part of the anarchy of capitalism.

This recession is also different from some in the recent past in another way: mass unemployment has also hit Western Europe, especially Great Britain, France and West Germany. Could this turn into a world depression? There is a mountain of consumer debt, well over $100 billion in the U.S. alone. There is also a tre-

mendous corporate debt, so huge that the federal government has had to back up outfits like Chrysler to keep them from going under. On top of all this is the critical mass of international debt owed to U.S. and Western capitalist banks by neo-colonial countries and even Russian client states. Poland alone owes $20 billion.

As unemployment continues to mount and factories close, profits go down and these debts start to go unpaid. If the banks are impelled by shrinking cash reserves to call in these loans, and the borrowers default, the entire international financial structure could fail. Already several large banks have been absorbed by still larger ones to forestall that possibility. The situation was described by ***New York Times*** financial editor Leonard Silk:

> With the piling up of debts, domestically and internationally, the classic conditions for a serious economic breakdown appear to exist...the U.S. and the rest of the world seem at once to have created a huge "chain letter" [of credit] – a process that could collapse, with devastating effect on output, income and unemployment, if the flow of credit were cut off.
>
> But to keep the chain letter growing, with credit mounting higher and higher, would *add to the dangers of worse inflation and a still more serious collapse later.*(emphasis ours – ed.)
>
> *– New York Times, Nov. 4, '81*

The bosses try to answer this insoluble problem of their declining system in many ways, all of them calling for the workers to take the losses. Budget cuts of social services have become standard operating procedure. Racism and mass layoffs are being stepped up. Deportations of undocumented workers are being used to whip up a frenzy about "foreign" workers "stealing jobs" from native-born workers. These tactics are aimed at steering workers away from the real culprit, capitalism and its bosses. But there are also number of new wrinkles.

"Special contracts" have been signed in many locals in the auto, steel and rubber industries which break the national contracts, in a downward direction. They often include not only wage cuts but changes in work-rules, permitting the bosses to load more work onto individual workers, and thereby allowing them to lay off the "excess." And once GM, for instance, is able to ram through such a "special contract" in one local – with the energetic assistance of the UAW leadership – they can go to the others and say, "Look at so-and-so, they accepted this and they're still working and eligible for their pensions, so you had better toe the mark." Slowly but surely, and especially in auto, the unions are being broken in this fashion. In fact, GM has instituted a nation-wide in-plant program to "explain" to workers about GM's "plight" and why the workers must "cooperate" with this billion-dollar giant if they want to "save your job."

The depths to which this kind of save-the-bosses thinking can plunge workers are evident in the recent contract signed by the Steelworkers union and the Timkin Co., manufacturers of bearings and alloy steel. This $1.5 billion outfit is now proceeding with a $500,000,000 plant in Canton, Ohio, based on a contract which:

- Bars strikes for eleven years, until 1992;
- Cuts wages by $2.00 an hour, or 20%;
- Bars workers from even using arbitration to settle seniority and transfer contract violations by the company, also for eleven years;
- Bars Timkin workers from using their seniority to gain positions at the new plant (if laid off from other plants covered by the regular contract) for the first three years.

The workers rejected this monstrosity on the first vote but the rejection was reversed on the second try. "The leadership of the union was very aggressive in selling the agreement," according to Canton Mayor Stanley Cmich. ***(Columbus Dispatch, Nov. 3)***

Another "sign of the times" is the court decision in the Philadelphia teachers strike which sent the pickets back to work without a 10% wage increase already included in a previous contract. When the raise became due, the Board of Education claimed it "didn't have the money" to pay it. The teachers struck, but the leadership went to court in what they claimed was an open-and-shut case. Well, the judge shut the case, all right, right in the teachers' pocketbooks. He ruled that since the Board "had no money," they couldn't afford to pay the increase and therefore didn't have to. In other words, he simply voided the contract. It sets a pattern for any boss who says "We don't have the money."

Still another hoax dreamed up by the bosses is the plant "buy-out," in which unprofitable plants are unloaded on the workers. One recent example of this scam involves GM's Hyatt Roller Bearing factory in Clark, N.J. The workers there were pushed into establishing an Employee Stock Ownership Plan, borrowing $60 million, and "buying" the plant from GM. The company had threatened to close the factory because it was "losing" money. In fact, they warned the workers that if they turned down the deal, GM would would buy the parts from Japan – so much for the company's bally-hooed "Buy American" program! The local UAW leadership got together with a "consultant" and local bankers and pushed it through. Former plant managers are the "new" managers. Workers "agreed" to take a 30% wage cut. One UAW official says the plant will now be "more efficient" because "workers who formerly ran one machine can now run two." Talk about doing

the bosses' dirty work!

Many workers who didn't want any part of this fraud accepted it because there was no alternative leadership; and if they didn't continue working in a GM plant until retirement, they would lose their pensions. Of course, they may very well lose them anyway, once GM squeezes whatever they can out of this plant and halts orders from it.

It is an illusion to think that workers can "own" and "run" their own factories under capitalism. Bosses do not share power. Capitalism is a system which steals these profits from workers' labor power. GM will still be exploiting these Hyatt workers, only more so, since GM parts will be produced at lower wages and by fewer workers working harder – the workforce of 1,600 is being chopped in half. In addition to GM's gains, the banks will also be making a pile out of the worker' sweat, in the form of interest on the loans advanced to keep the plant open. So much for "workers' control" under capitalism.

One more way the bosses are trying to hoodwink workers into putting out more for less is the "Quality Circle" idea. This sham involves setting up workers' "teams" which supposedly take part in the decision-making process in production. With the full cooperation of the unions – "to eliminate waste and keep factories running" – companies are introducing this scam in order to help make up for their losses to competitors abroad. It puts worker against worker, and encourages workers to blame each other for inefficiency in plant procedures or for resisting speed-up. DuPont, in fact, introduced it as a barrier against unionization in its plants. In reality, the only way that workers can be or feel part of a team and make production decisions is when they really have that power – after the bosses, their profits and their profit system are eliminated; capitalism, by definition, means cutthroat competition, not cooperation, and certainly not cooperation between the exploiters and the workers they exploit. Quality Circles can only wind up pushing even more workers out of jobs.

Many of these new wrinkles have a particularly racist character to them, since in the drive to cut the work-force, the first workers to go are the last hired – predominantly the black and Latin workers. This is especially true in the auto industry, where probably the majority of the 265,000 workers laid off are black and Latin.

Just as the auto industry set a pattern for the whole working class in its original organizing efforts, beginning with the sit-down strikes of the 30s, and in raising wages and shortening hours, so, too, do the various schemes now occurring in auto set a new pattern – a *downward* one, this time. Workers can ill afford to look the

Well, That's Capitalism...

Fairy Tales from The New York Times

Worker-Owners on Strike

The New York Times / Richard Faverty

Striking workers on picket duty last week at South Bend Lathe's plant in South Bend, Ind.

According to the business news section of the New York Times, the workers in this picture are on strike against themselves.

The September 8 issue of the Times goes on for quite some length, wondering how it could be that workers who own the company they work for could ungratefully go on strike against it.

"Own the company they work for?" readers will ask. Well, not quite, it seems. The real story is that the company is run with the workers' money, so that they get screwed twice.

Several years ago, the previous owners of South Bend Lathe, about to fall into bankruptcy, came up with a scheme to make one last buck – these owners conned the workers into trading all their pension rights for the company's stock

In reality, however, the firm is run by a boss, who appoints the directors and answers to the banks who lent the company money to stay in business.

"Well," you may ask, "why don't the workers have a stockholders' meeting and throw the boss out?" The answer is that they don't have any stock. The bosses who set up this sweet deal made sure that the stock would be held by a trustee who holds it as collateral for the loans from the banks.

Stay tuned for more fairy tales from the bosses' press. Perhaps next time they will tell us how unemployed workers are enjoying their lovely long vacations.

other way when they see these various attacks against auto workers, because it will become the rationale for all bosses to say to their own workers, "If the higher-paid, stronger, auto workers have agreed to this in the name of 'saving the system,' it's good enough for you, too."

Is it any wonder that, just at the time that all these wage-cuts and cutbacks are occurring, the resurgence of the KKK is being pushed to the hilt by the bosses and their media? It's no accident that this virulent racism is being spread now, to keep the working class divided and in check, and to prevent it from rebelling against this all-out assault. These attacks are steps on the road to fascism, not too different from the road traveled in Hitler Germany.

In this drive to fascism to prepare for war, the union "leaders" become the "hit men", the enforcers of fascism. It is they who set up the workers for wage cuts ("in exchange" for "saving" jobs and pensions); who push workers into "buying" their own plants to bail out the bosses' "loser" factories; who refuse to organize working-class solidarity to win strikes and stop union-busting, who tell U.S. workers to "Buy American," (pitting them against brother and sister workers abroad, even as GM, Ford and Inland Steel, among others, make huge purchases abroad for greater profits). Is it any wonder that we say that these social fascist union fakers must be buried along with the system and the bosses for whom they front?

This drive towards a U.S.-style fascism is being intensified by the approach of imperialist war. It is the bosses' necessity to prepare for war that is driving them pell-mell into greater and greater repression of the working class economically, politically, culturally – in every way. They must have a docile working class, ready to work twice as long for half the pay; ready to blame other workers as scapegoats for their problems, rather than fighting the capitalist system; ready to support an imperialist war as a way to "solve" unemployment and "save America"; ready to give up their sons and daughters in such a war, and, in the final analysis, ready to die in a nuclear war for the greater "glory" of U.S. imperialism.

In 1939, the last major U.S. depression and its mass unemployment was "solved" by going to war, putting 14 million into the armed forces. But U.S. capitalism was an ascending system then; now it is in sharp decline, making it even more desperate as it prepares for war with the Russians, desperate in much the same way the German ruling class was 50 years ago, when it imposed fascism.

What is our answer? We must explain to workers why this is happening to our class with the ideas outlined here and in the sale of tens of thousands of ***Challenge-Desafío***, why it will get worse, and why the risk of inaction is far greater than the risk of action. Based on these ideas, we need to organize strikes against layoffs, wage and service cuts; general strikes of solidarity; build multi-racial unity, especially by building the International Committee Against Racism into a huge anti-racist bulwark of working class struggle; oppose and expose the social fascist labor fakers everywhere – on the shop floor, in the union hall, in union election campaigns and contract struggles; organize masses of youth, in and out of the military, against mass unemployment and racist-imperialist war; unite all students with the working class in a mighty worker-student alliance to pin the bosses to the wall.

But even all that will not end unemployment, racism, inflation and imperialist war. Only destroying capitalism, the cause of all these problems, will smash them. Capitalism cannot be reformed. Capitalist profits are stolen from workers' labor power. The capitalist state is used to enforce this theft. Every working class struggle must have as its main goal the destruction of that capitalist state and the profit system it protects.

Only destroying capitalism, the cause of all these problems, will smash them.

Capitalism must be replaced by a workers' system – socialism – in which the working class rules led by its communist vanguard which leads it to destroy the bosses' system in which the working class decides not only production but how the value we produce will be distributed equitably, with consideration for the needs of *all* workers, internationally. This cannot occur under a dog-eat-dog capitalist system in which bosses' profits are the first consideration and all "solutions" to problems flow from that first necessity, to keep capitalism profitable. In the last analysis, we need to have jobs, to be free of racism, to be free of the threat of war, including nuclear war, the working class must make a socialist revolution and eliminate the class and the system that profits from war, racism and unemployment.

The choice is in our hands. Join the Progressive Labor Party and fight for socialism.

Divorce, German Style

U.S. Rulers' Alliances Crumble

It wasn't too many years ago that the Soviet bosses liked to call the capital of West Germany the center for "Nazi revanchists." Now, on the eve of the peace charade in Switzerland, the Soviets are referring to the leaders of West Germany as "our partners for peace." Crocodile tears stream down the puffy faces of Soviet leaders as they continue to ooze dulcet tones and heap praise on their former "worst enemies". Always ready to pervert the heroic efforts of workers and communists who paid a high price for the defeat of the German bosses' armies in World War II; the Soviet imperialists now shamelessly speak of the "terrible sufferings of both our peoples in World War II."

As the U.S.-Soviet peace fandango opens in Switzerland, West Germany has appeared at center stage in international politics. The main result of Brezhnev's recent trip to West Germany was to confirm that it is now Bonn, and not Paris, that has become the special conduit for Moscow to relay its important messages to the U.S. leaders, and the rest of the world. This is ironic, because ever since World War II it has been the U.S. that has counted on West Germany as its main ally in Western Europe, if not the world. This was intended to enable the U.S. to accomplish its long cherished goal of subjugating the Soviet Union politically, economically, and if need be militarily.

After WWII the U.S. bosses poured billions into West Germany to insure that the West Germans would not fall into the camp of the Soviet Union. The U.S. believed that if Germany became a capitalist showcase it would be a significant bulwark against the hated "red devil," and even be a lure to, at least, the East Germans. Besides the billions in handouts given the West

By U.M.

Such good friends – Soviet boss Brezhnev and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt share a toast to their new imperialist alliance, leaving the U.S. ruling class out in the cold.

German bosses by the U.S., U.S. bosses opted for the West Germans building a large military machine. Once again, Germany was to act as a buffer, or jump-off point against the Soviets. Generally speaking, the policies of the U.S. and Britain were a repeat of their pre-World War II plans for Germany.

This time the U.S. and the British figured that they could avoid a double cross by the new Nazis. As we know from history, the Hitlerites at first allowed the West to build them up as a bulwark against the first socialist state – the Soviet Union. The plans in the eyes of the bosses all over the world, was for the Nazis to invade and crush the Soviets. In return the Nazis would be allowed to control huge areas, from Western Europe to the Urals. Well, as we know, "thieves fall out." The Nazis figured they were so big and strong, that they could go for the whole ball of wax. The capitalist bosses who spawned the Nazis were lulled by the idea that the Nazi guns were only facing the East. Starry eyed, bushy tailed and in love with the vigor of German anti-communism, these bosses were not prepared. They could not conceive that their "Rosemary's Baby" could ever turn on them.

But that is exactly what the German bosses did. They attacked the soft West before hitting their main target in the East. We know the outcome! We know the price in blood that millions of workers had to pay in the defeat of the once-"invincible" Wehrmacht.

As in all relations, the tale of post war Germany bears many contradictions. The new Nazis, the present West German bosses have doublecrossed their pals once again. This time in a different way. The German bosses sucked up all the gold and dollars the U.S. bosses ladled out, but they resisted the idea of once again being the stalking horse for the bosses of the world, especially the U.S. rulers. The German bosses were well aware of their common boundaries with the Soviet Union and its allies. And they fully understood that without East Germany, West Germany was indeed half a country. They also knew that the Soviets would not surrender East Germany to their hated West German enemies. Consequently, they made the obvious deduction that having a military strategy for reunification at that time had a dim future. Their lack of enthusiasm for the massive military build-up urged on them by the Americans was fortified by their knowledge of the events of WWII. The costs to Germans was staggering. And if the costs were staggering then, consider what they would be now in a war with a Soviet Union, armed with nuclear weapons, only minutes away from West Germany.

So, the West German bosses have resisted serious rearmament, much to the chagrin of the U.S. The Germans played only a modest military role in the build-up of NATO and studiously avoided other U.S. military efforts around the globe. By the time of the U.S. war of aggression in Vietnam, the Germans, like many other U.S. allies, did not lift a finger to help. As a matter of fact, while the U.S. rulers were sinking hundreds of billions into the war in Vietnam, the Germans were expanding and modernising their industrial machine. By the end of the Vietnam War, German manufacturing plants were far more modern and efficient than their com petitors in the U.S. The Volkswagen invaded all the economic markets of the world. The U.S. became the land of Volkswagens, and we might add, Toyotas and Datsuns. The Japanese bosses, too, knew which side their bread was buttered on, and developed a strategy similar to that of the Germans.

U.S. imperialism has lurched from catastrophe to debacle.

Over a period of thirty years the stage had been set for the West Germans to move away from the U.S., and into a closer relationship with their former enemies to the East. Of course, this was facilitated by the reversal of socialism in the Soviet Union. After World War II, the Soviet Union, once the land of the workers and a beacon to workers around the world, became capitalist.

As the U.S. rulers saw that the keystone of their strategy for world domination was slipping out of its camp, they became more and more bellicose. All their urgings, pleadings, rantings for greater military contributions to NATO were falling on deaf ears, not only in Germany but in the rest of Europe and Japan as well. In order to offset this, the U.S. leaned on their friends in high places in Europe to accept more and more nuclear missiles and other nuclear weapons. The U.S. claimed that more missiles would match Soviet military strength.

But by now the main sections of the European ruling class, while still publicly proclaiming that the Soviet Union was their main enemy, were privately saying that their chief problem was U.S. imperialism. In a tacit alliance with the Soviets, the West European bourgeoisie helped spawn the anti-nuclear movement. Many observers in the U.S. and in Europe characterised this development as the "better red than dead" movement. Even Helmut Schmidt, Chancellor of West Germany, tagged it exactly that way.

Of course, U.S. bosses were quick to see the objective reality that these peace movements sweeping Europe were only helping the Soviets, and hurting the U.S. It was becoming clear that "Yankee go home" was again becoming a mass phenomenon in Europe. Europeans were calling into question the stationing of the new missiles and neutron bombs on the continent. A new spectre is now haunting the U.S. bosses – even if they were able to expand their nuclear arsenal in Europe could they ever use it effectively? Or would the Europeans possibly destroy them or prevent their firing?

For the moment, this movement is in the best interests of West European bosses, especially in West Germany. The West Germans made great gains from the "detente" period in the 70s. They would like them to continue. They are by far the biggest Western exporter to the Soviet Union. Their trade multiplied by six times between the Bonn-Moscow Treaty of 1970 and 1980. They just signed a natural gas pipe line deal that will run into the next century. This will assure $15 billions in West German exports in the next few years and $200 billion of Soviet gas by the year 2000.

Expanding economic relations with the Soviets and other East bloc countries has at least two important features. The German "economic miracle" is finished. Germany is racked with economic stagnation and mass unemployment. Young workers and students are more and more disenchanted with capitalism. Many are moving to the left. The Soviet natural gas deal, the Germans hope, will alleviate the problems of low or no growth of the economy, and unemployment.

Perhaps even more important, is that the huge flow of gas from the Urals will permit Germany and other European countries to break the grip of dependence on Mid-East oil. More to the point: it is the U.S. that controls the flow of Mid-East oil. So, this fact of life acts to make Western Europe and Japan hostages of U.S. policies, which are usually not in the interests of these bosses. As long as the U.S. controls most energy resources of Western Europe and Japan the U.S. will be in a stronger position to dictate policies to their allies. The Germans find this

state of affairs intolerable.

All this makes Bonn the pivotal force in Western Europe. This is provoking old fears in the U.S. and even in France of a new Rapallo, a repeat to the 1922 German-Soviet Treaty which enabled Lenin to build the new Soviet State, and helped Germany rebuild and rearm after World War I. Obviously, Moscow hopes to completely wean West Germany away from the West. This is not likely to be accomplished as long as the Soviets hang onto East Germany, but it is not impossible that the bosses of Moscow and the two Germanies may come up with some kind of confederation, which stops just short of full unity.

Frightened of being driven off the rich European shores, the mumbling, bumbling Reagan gang has suddenly dropped its big nuclear talk and started to sound like peaceniks. Have the bitter foes of Moscow really embarked on a peace process? The answer must be a resounding NO!

Relations between Washington and Moscow have never been worse! While both titans are engaged in a hot propaganda battle for "marshmallow of the year," they both continue to plan each other's destruction. This has a limiting effect on their ability or need to compromise. Both countries are on a collision course all over the globe – in Central America, Africa, the Persian Gulf, Southeast Asia, and of course in Europe. Both sides are proceeding with plans for more guns and less butter. Interestingly enough, a good part of the newer U.S. strategy for expanding the arms race is to spend the Soviets to death. The U.S. bosses figure that they were more able than the Soviets to afford a stepped-up arms race. This theory is being dashed on the shores of reality. The U.S. economy is floundering. Cries are coming, even from high places for cutting back the arms budget. U.S. bosses, while starving the workers to pay for armaments, are themselves squealing like pigs because even their stolen wealth has limits.

Few people seriously believe that the Soviets have altered their policies. Moscow is still probing for opportunities, and trying to increase its holdings, while posturing as the champion of the oppressed masses and the dove of peace. Brezhnev's trip to Bonn last week was a tour de force for these policies.

Has the U.S. actually changed its policies? NO! The new Reagan tactics are merely designed to mollify the peace movements in Europe. It is an attempt by the U.S. to gain more time so they can take the propaganda initiative away from the Soviets. If they succeed, then the U.S. may be able to place its missiles in Europe. Make no mistake about it – the U.S. bosses are desparate. They have internal differences about how to hang onto their stolen trillions, but they are united on doing just that.

Many attribute the new dovish sounds coming from Reagan and "Crazy Al" Haig as a compromise between the different factions in the administration, which appear to be lead by Haig and Weinberger. On one side are the more open reactionaries like Lyn Nofziger and Jesse Helms who can only see dealing with the Soviet "devils" from absolute stregnth. Weinberger leads this camp.

Others, including some ex-Democrats, or quiet Democrats in the administration, such as Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle, and Eugene Rostow, lean toward this group, but stand between it and the more balance-of-power-oriented people like Kissinger and his disciple Haig. These latter forces are extremely fearful that "positions-of-strength" policies will surely lose out in Europe and Japan and that the Soviets will come out smelling like roses – and more important, with all the bacon. At the moment, all factions are into the big peace offensive, thus delaying the day of reckoning.

The world is slipping from the grasp of the U.S. bosses. Time is on the side of the Soviets.

It is clearly absurd that the world must hold its breath over the differences between a Haig and a Weinberger. Their differences really mean little against the real crisis of U.S, imperialism. The world is slipping from the grasp of the U.S. bosses, and time is on the side of the Soviets. This decline of U.S. fortunes internationally is reflected in a decline in the U.S. This situation is leading inexorably to war.

The question we must ask ourselves is not "Who's ahead?" or "Which side is losing ground?" but "What must *we* do?" The answer to this question is clear. Only through the building of a revolutionary movement, in the U.S. and world-wide, is there any future for the working class. With that movement, we have the power to end the deadly dance of the bloodsuckers, and build a new society.

An Orgy of Hypocrisy

U.S., Soviet Bosses Fight Over Poland

For the past sixteen months, since the organization of the Solidarity movement, the Soviet-backed Polish government and the U.S.-, Vatican-backed Solidarity movement have been staggering to a confrontation. Days before to the government's institution of martial law, the Jaruzelski junta claimed that the Solidarity movement was stockpiling weapons and medical supplies, and organizing secret leadership in preparation for a coup against the state. But the Soviet-backed fascist state acted first. Martial law was imposed, and the state went about its business of smashing the fascist Solidarity movement. The world was viewing an important proxy war between the imperialists in Moscow and Washington. Events in Poland reflect Soviet-U.S. antagonisms, and are among the early stages of World War III.

For the past sixteen months, all the parties inside and outside Poland connected to the struggle for political power moved with caution, caution born of weakness. The strained relations between the "union" and the state went through cycles.

After each near-miss, there was a brief period of receding and then talks. Neither force inside Poland, nor their mentors in Washington or Moscow, were anxious to see things go all the way. Moscow was reluctant to intervene militarily in Poland, and the U.S., at this point, is unable to do so. Nonetheless, both imperialists egged their lackeys on. Obviously, of the two, the Soviets and their Polish sheep dogs were more resolute. Finally, the breaking point came. Armed struggle replaced negotiations and staggering vacillation. The social fascists in Poland and Moscow went on

By G.F.S.

His only friend: Reagan hugs former Polish ambassador who defected to U.S. As U.S. bosses fall further behind Soviet imperialism, they suck up to any ally they can get – even one without a country

the offensive against the fascists backed by Washington and the Pope.

For the moment, despite pockets of resistence, the Soviets and their stooges seem to have the upper hand. In the declaration imposing martial law, the government completely ignored the existence of the Unified Polish Workers' Party (communist party). Afterwards, the central party office building was stripped of its name and insignia. Everything was done in the name of the Army and the nation. This was a clear call to nationalism, which eliminated any illusion that there was or is a socialist state. Prior to the putsch, there was a speculation inside and outside Poland about the loyalty of the Army to the officer corps. The question has been answered, at least for the present. The Army seems to have moved swiftly and with some efficiency in putting down the Solidarity movement.

Inside Poland, it appears that the state has been able to force the Solidarity forces to retreat. Perhaps this was happening even before martial law was imposed. Solidarity, which claimed 9.5 million members, was showing signs of malaise. Some leaders privately conceded that at least 30% of its members were wavering and were open to government persuasion.

There was a growing feeling that Solidarity was being out-maneuvered by the government. "The union is not stronger than it was; it is weaker, and every activist recognizes this," said Karol Modzelewski, a top strategist of Solidarity.(***New York Times,*** Dec. 13) As a result, activists who realized opportunities for a coup were receding quickly, moved towards confrontation. "The philosophy of 'one final push' is taking hold among regional Solidarity leaders," said an East German close to the union.

This was borne out by tapes the government was able to get of a "secret" Solidarity meeting. The tapes made the "union" appear as instigators, veering from its claimed goal of "only being interested in economic matters." Walesa was particularly embarrassed by the tapes because millions heard him say he believed in the inevitability of confrontation for the purpose of seizing political power. Undoubtedly, this helped the government isolate Solidarity from some of the population, particularly those who viewed the movement as merely one for reforms.

Meese, who is supposed to be in charge of the White House when Reagan (who was at Camp David) is sunning or slumming, was in California. National Security Advisor Allen is on leave because he got caught with his hand in

Solidarity's Fascist Hero

Solidarity's fascist Lech Walesa

Even before the imposition of military rule by Gen. Jaruzelski, it had become clearer and clearer that the contest in Poland was a struggle between two camps of fascists, each allied with a different imperialist power. The last fig-leaf of "democracy" shielding the Solidarity movement was stripped away November 11, when the government yielded to pressure from Solidarity and resurrected November 11 as a celebration of the "rebirth" of Poland as an independent country after World War I.

The observance this year was the first since the Nazi invasion in 1939. After World War II, the early communists in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union buried this travesty because they knew all too well the real meaning of Nov. 11. Between the two world wars, the Polish government was led by the infamous Marshal Pilsudski, in a regime marked by mass murder of Jews, communists and thousands of militant workers. Admiral Horthy of Hungary and Pilsudski of Poland were the early European fascists whom Hitler emulated.

Ironically, it was only two years ago that a rally of fascist dissidents marked Nov. 11 by assembling during a mass at Warsaw's St. John's Cathedral and walking about 12 blocks at night to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. En route, they were attacked by leftists, and their placards were destroyed.

But this year on Nov. 11, 15,000 people marched in honor of Pilsudski. For the most part, the marchers sang religious hymns and nationalist songs in a two-hour long tribute. On the radio that morning, the fascist marching of the Pilsudski legion, "We Are the First Brigade," blared forth. This song had not been played in public since the Nazi invasion. During the Stalin era, singing this song privately or in public would have marked one as a fascist sympathizer, and sent one right to jail. In 1920, Pilsudski had attacked the workers' Red Army in battles near the new Soviet borders. Pilsudski was correctly villified by all communists around the world as a fascist butcher.

Now, veneration of Pilsudski by the new fascist movement has reached new "heights." Solidarity members at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk said they were renaming the yard for Pilsudski. And it is common today to find this mass murderer's picture hanging over the fireplace in many homes. The popular resurrection of this criminal would be like a public display of sympathy for Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy, Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Salazar in Portugal, the Shah in Iran, or Franco in Spain.

Walesa's fascist hero, Pilsudski

Over the last year or so, some friends, in and out of our movement, have been puzzled over our characterization of the Solidarity movement as fascist. Be puzzled no longer! Anyone trying to make a revolution in Poland today would be viciously attacked by a coalition of fascists, including the government, the Catholic Church, Solidarity and their allies in the West and East. Workers do not automatically move to the Left when faced with sharp oppression. Workers will only move to the left – to socialism – if there is a revolutionary communist movement to lead them.

The main lesson for us in the U.S. is to redouble our efforts, and redouble them again and again, to provide political leadership to the working class, winning them away from the fascist forces of the ruling class. There are no easy paths to this end: only "old-fashioned" hard political work can succeed!

the till, or because he doesn't agree with the current non-policies in Washington.

To make matters worse for the western bosses, Schmidt of Germany was hobnobbing with East German boss Honecker in East Germany. When martial law was imposed in Poland, Schmidt went, "Tsk, tsk, tsk." And at that very moment, Mitterrand of France was busy blowing his nose on U.S. foreign policy by saying France intended to recognize the PLO. Just prior to the attack by the state in Poland, U.S. foreign policy was all wrapped up in the fiction about the Qaddafi plot to assassinate Reagan or others. Naturally, the Reagan scam about how little old Qaddafi was out to gun him down was summarily rejected by all his so-called allies, as they once again viewed with alarm the incompetence flowing out of Washington.

Interestingly enough, bankers in this country and in Europe were mainly worried abou how they were going to get their 36 billion in loans back from an unstable Poland. the day martial law was imposed, $550 million in interest was due these banks, although the date has now been advanced to Dec. 28. Bankers around the world are shivering about the $2.5 billion in debt service owed to them. Only by keeping Poland stable and solvent can they ever hope to retrieve their loans. It seems that most of them feel they have a better chance with the "ins" than the "outs." In any event, if there is civil war in Poland, they won't get a dime. One could get the idea that the banks are at odds with the over-all class goals of their brethren. But then

again, money is money.

In the meantime, Reagan is posing as a champion of the workers – that is, in Poland, of course. After all, in the U.S., workers are hungry, unemployed, fired for striking (like the air traffic controllers), and millions who are working are taking pay cuts while still being victims of inflation. Thousands of Haitian and Salvadoran refugees are suffering brutal treatment in concentration camps. Many are dying. Thousands of undocumented workers are harassed and deported daily, causing those who remain here to be fearful and forced to work under pre-Civil War conditions. Racism sweeps the land, given a big shove by Reagan, who is busy eliminating even those weak "anti-discrimination" laws passed over the years. Fascist groups are springing up around the U.S., led by forces similar to the Polish Pilsudski fascists who lead Solidarity. Yes, if Reagan is a "friend" of workers anywhere, who needs enemies?

The lessons of events in Poland and elsewhere are clear. You cannot depend on imperialists, whether in Washington or in Moscow, to win peace and economic and social justice in the world. You can depend on these bosses to create tensions, unemployment, fascism, racism and wars – big and small.

The bosses would like to make us believe that socialism exists in Poland and the Soviet Union. Nothing is further from the truth. The bosses do this in order to discredit genuine developments for socialism. New ruling cliques have sprung up in these countries, instituting capitalism. If there was a genuine socialist revolution in Poland, the Soviet and U.S. bosses would probably join hands in an effort to crush it. We should always understand that a boss at home is a boss away from home. Reagan & Co. support other capitalist forces in Poland. A class that starves and oppresses workers at home is not going to help workers abroad. Look how the U.S. "helped" the workers in Vietnam – supporting the fascists. Look who the U.S. rulers support in Central and South America – the fascists. Look who the U.S. supports in Turkey – the fascists who jail and kill trade unionists. In South Africa, full support is eagerly given the apartheid fascists. U.S. bosses support reaction on a world-wide basis. It is no different in Poland.

A fight for revolutionary socialism is opposed by all bosses. Consequently, our path is always lighted by fighting against what the bosses want. They surely don't want a revolution for socialism!

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No Economic Miracle

European Bosses Take Some Losses

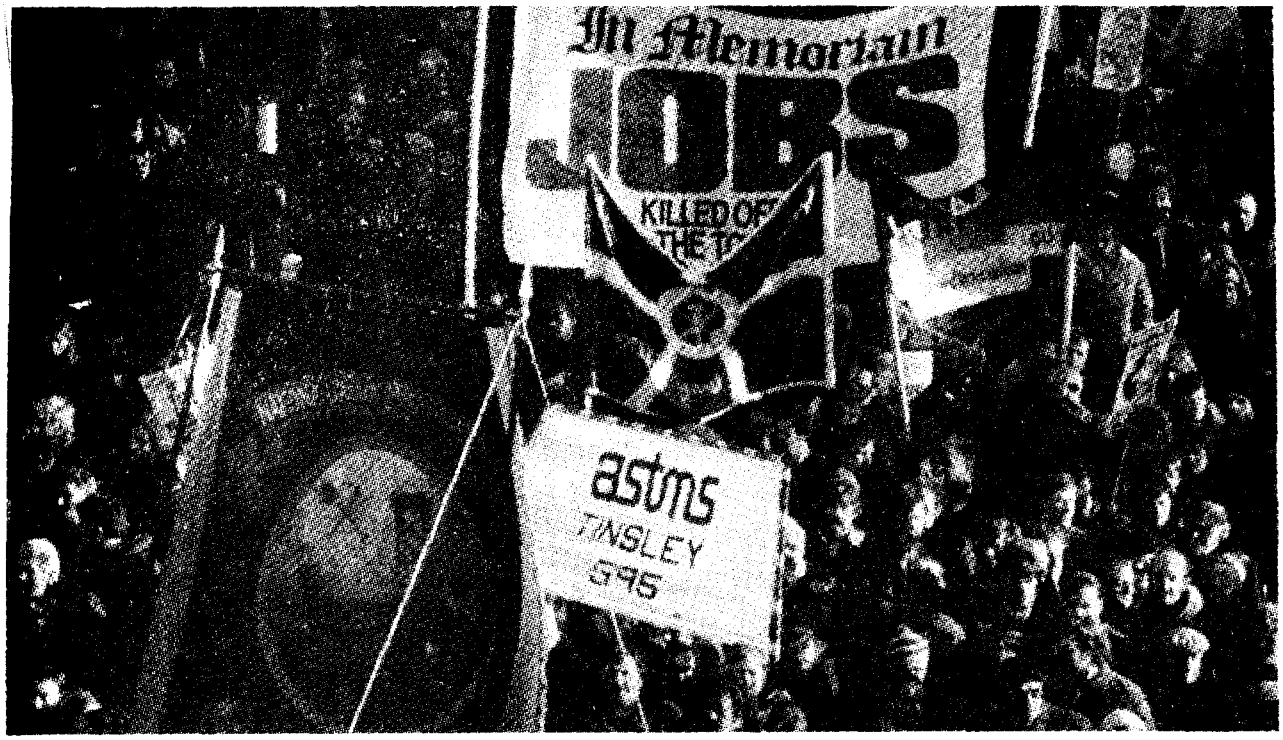
European capitalism is on the skids. The collapse of the Common Market as a viable economic foprce has emerged as one of the most important consequences of intensified U.S.-Soviet rivalry, the general crisis of worldwide capitalism, and the enormous energy payments Western bosses must now make to the Arab oil moguls.

For two decades, the relative stability of the European Community (EC) and the already accelerating decline of U.S. imperialism allowed post-World War II economic growth in Europe to outpace growth in the U.S. Seven European countries now have higher standards of living than the United States. However, the first round of oil price hikes in 1973 proved a rude awakening to European capital. The nine European members of the U.S.-dominated imperialist trade agency known as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development suffered their firstr year of negative growth in nearly a quarter of a century.

Although Europe's capitalists rebounded briefly, their dike was basically broken. The quadrupling of prices by OPEC bosses had already begun forcing them to take out their problems on "their" own working classes, whom they laid off in droves, and to whom they passed on their increased energy costs in the form of price hikes.

Then, in 1979, the oil moguls jacked energy prices up agin, with even more disastrous consequences for European capital. Most European countries are now running heavy deficits. The estimated 1981 total for the nine European members of the OECD is $37 billion. The predicted deficit figure for 1982 is $21 billion. Quoted in ***Business Week*** (Dec. 7, '81), top U.S. liberal imperialist

By J.G.A.



British workers march against unemployment. Europe's economy, hit by high oil prices and inter-imperialist rivalry, offers European workers no shelter from the decay of the capitalist system.

spokesman George Ball moans: "The impact of the price hikes has been much like the capital drain out of Europe after World War I," a drain that intensified inter-imperialist rivalry throughout the 1920s and '30s and that formed a large part of the rush toward World War II and the capitalist redivision of markets, resources, and labor power tools.

The medium-range outlook for Europe's bosses is hardly promising. After a year and a half of "recession" – i.e. high-level economic attacks against workers to recoup some of the profit lost in energy expenses, the economies of France, Germany, and Italy may show some short term improvement in 1982. EC shills are nervously hoping that real growth among their membership may hover between one and two percent next year. But not even a minor dent in unemployment can be accomplished with growth rates of less than four to five percent. None of the European rulers' crystal-ball gazers forsees more than half that figure through the 1980s.

The most optimistic figures estimate unemployment in Western Europe at more than 9%. However, all capitalists have techniques for making official unemployment appear less severe than it is in reality. Some EC bigwigs admit that 12% of the adult labor force has no work, and that among those under age 26 unemployment exceeds 40%, roughly the same rate as among black youth in the U.S.

This crisis has set in motion a series of inevitable contradictions, all of them tied to U.S.-Soviet inter-imperialist rivalry and all of them leading toward a Third World War.

In the first place, rivalry among European capitalists has begun to intensify. When the EC was set up in 1957, it was supposed to be a free-trade zone for its members in Europe and eventually the rest of the world. Deluded capitalist visionaries like the French Jean Monnet built castles in the sand while dreaming of a "United States of Europe." Like most capitalist visions, this one has already turned into its opposite.

Because of their no-growth or slow-growth economies and their enfeebled status as trading partners, Europe's rulers are now resorting to defensive protectionist policies. Because of customs obstacles, border taxes, etc., it is now as difficult to ship goods from France to Germany as it is to ship from Germany to Australia. New trade limitations concerning axle height, safety features, and electrical syste3ms make the sale of EC automobiles across European borders as difficult as exporting them to Japan.

The collapse of the EC is mirrored in the mounting trade deficits between European capital on the one hand and U.S. and Japanese capital on the other. The EC is expected to run a $25 billion deficit with the U.S. and a large deficit with Japan in 1981. These deficits in turn, inhibit the development of competitive European technology. Although European bosses spend as much a their U.S. counterparts on research,

they have yet to come up with a big profit-maker in high technology. They are now falling over each other to get started in office products and integrated circuits. This technological gap is also reflected in the failure to modernize basic industries. Japanese competition in automobiles and machine tools poses a major threat to the survival of these industries in the EC countries.

These weaknesses will further exacerbate rivalry among the European capitalists, whose governments will push nationalist "buy French" or "buy British,, purchasing hysteria to protect their fledgling high-tech industries from each other.

European economic collapse further sharpens the growing contradictions between European and U.S. capital. In the 1960s, rapid growth and favorable investment opportunities had U.S. multinational corporations drooling. Now, however, U.S. companies are looking to park their capital where it will get a higher rate of return. Wages less depressed than in the U.S. and government policies preventing U.S. companies from closing up shop at will, have the U.S. rulers in a panic. On paper, U.S. investment in Europe has been increasing at the rate of 14% over the last three years. However, nearly 75% of this figure has been from re-invested profit, an increase which in turn was puffed up by inflation and by the wild gyrations of currency values. *New* investment capital, the key to a health profit rate, had been coming to Europe from the U.S. at a mere 4% until mid-1981, when it stopped altogether.

European bosses are pulling capital out of their own countries, because it doesn't net them an adequate rate of profit. One of their main depositories is the low wage, U.S.A., into which they had poured $43.5 billion by the end of 1980 (including Barclay's gobbling up of Aetna Insurance and Elf Aquitaine's recent grab of Texasgulf).

High U.S. interest rates and the short-term relative strengthening of the dollar will fail to prevent intensified fluctuation if future European currency rates. Even if the European Monetary System survives – hardly a sure bet – the ranges within which currencies can circulate will undoubtedly widen, creating a nightmare for U.S. investment bankers. Furthermore, even the "strengthened" dollar will prove to be an albatross, because it will eat into the European profits of U.S. subsidiaries once they are converted into U.S. currency.

The rising tide of European economic nationalism will make the "repatriation" of U.S. subsidiaries' European profits more and more difficult. French rulers tightened their controls after the Mitterand election in May, and the reimposition of British exchange controls is "just a matter of time," according to an economist quoted in the December 7 ***Business Week.*** Thus, from a number of points of view, the European economic crisis has added to the bilateral and multilateral conflicts between European and U.S. capitalists. Even now, U.S. steel barons, the bosses of America's sickest industry along with auto, are suing to box Euorpean steel magnates out of the U.S. market – and steel is Europe's sickest and most heavily subsidized industry.

However, the sharpest contradiction between U.S. and European bosses concerns the burgeoning love affair between European and Soviet or Soviet-dominated capital. In this dispute, U.S. imperialism has lurched from catastrophe to debacle.

When Soviet bosses invaded Afghanistan, the Carter White House yapped about stopping all high-technology trade between Western countries and the U.S.S.R. None of its supposed allies went along with this gambit. The Japanese said they would "take the matter under consideration." The French answered that they could more easily influence the Soviet rulers by maintaining rather than cancelling trade. The U.S. boycott was a fiasco.

The present White House pea-brain is doing cartwheels to prevent both European and U.S. companies from selling strategic goods to the Soviet imperialist orbit. So far, he has come up with goose eggs. Despite pressure from the Reagan gang, West German bosses just signed a deal to build a $15 billion natural gas pipeline with the Soviet Union.

Western Europe's trade with the Soviet bloc is growing rapidly: Hitler tried to march eastward, but today's desperate EC rulers have no choice other than to be dragged in that direction. European banks now hold $60 billion in debt from Soviet-dominated countries. This is hardly and incentive for them to dance to Reagan's tune. The German bosses in particular refuse to knuckle under to U.S. capital on this question. Official statistics indicate that West Germany gets only 8% of its export revenue from the East, including East Germany. However, "...some high Reagan administration political analysts believe that the true figure lies somewhere between 24% and 27%." (***Business Week,*** December 7)

European rulers can add; they can comprehend the logic of U.S. political-military catastrophes in recent years; and they can read maps. The post-World War II alliance between them and U.S. capitalists, built on the International Monetary Fund and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, was possible because these bosses temporarily had common economic interests. However, the nature of capitalism sooner or later transforms co-operation into competition. The strains in the political, military, and economic sides of the NATO alliance

started to show as early as the 1960s, when the French ruling class pulled out of it. These cracks are widening daily, and they deepen each other.

Western Europe remains an enormous reservoir of production and therefore of capitalist profit. The Soviet moguls are drooling over it; U.S. bosses are desperately trying to hang onto their foothold in it. The weakness of U.S. imperialism's position was clearly exposed by Reagan's crude about-face offering to eliminate all medium-range missiles in Europe if the Soviets did the same. Obviously, this maneuver was intended to be a sop to the rising tide of fundamentally pro-Soviet neutralism and pacifism that is sweeping Europe as a political consequence of the economic crisis. It cannot work. The process of U.S. imperialist decline, of European capitalism's collapse, and of its drift toward the Soviet imperialists – the only other major capitalist force in the world today – is irreversible.

European capitalist politics reflect this instability. Old coalitions are collapsing, and new ones are replacing them. The basic issues concern which of the imperialist giants to ally with and how best to squeeze profits out of domestic working classes. Because of the strength of the old Communist-led workers' movements in Western Europe, many ruling classes were forced to grant certain concessions to workers as a price for maintaining production and relative stability. During the so-called "good" years of the 1950s and 60s, governments came up with certain minimal reforms. The good old days weren't that great even in their heyday – look at France in 1968. Nonetheless, compared to the U.S., unemployment insurance, health insurance, and maternity benefits have been somewhat less abysmal in Western Europe. However, the European economic crisis has already begun to make these reforms a thing of the past, and the bosses are scrambling to figure out who can grind down the workers fastest and hardest.

Germany is racked with economic stagnation and mass unemployment.

Every period of capitalist decline is accompanied by a sharpening of internal contradiction among the bosses and a reshuffling of alliance. The internal dogfight among U.S. rulers known as Watergate proved this point, and the current disarray of European politics proves it again. In 1976, the liberals who had held power in Sweden for 43 years were dumped by more openly right-wing conservatives. In 1979, the obviously reactionary Thatcher took over in Britain from the social fascist Laborites. A similar development took place this year in Norway.

On the other hand, social democratic demagogues have turned the tables on the blatant rightwingers in some countries, like France and Greece. In every case, these governments represent one wing or another of the dominant trend of thought within individual ruling classes. Whether they want to increase government spending as a way out of the crisis (Mitterand, Papandreou) or "solve" it with the Reagan-style farce of "free market" economics (Thatcher), whether they want to make a greater or lesser break with U.S. imperialists and hop into the sack with the Soviets sooner rather than later, these are capitalist governments. The European working class can expect the same fundamental treatment from all of them. Nothing more clearly exposes what is on the minds of Europe's desperate rulers than the recent statement attributed to Ulrich Schroeder, an economist for the Westdeutsche Landesbank, in ***Business Week:*** "Of all Europe's problems, one of the most serious is a feeling that people are entitled to keep all the gains in living standards and social benefits that have been achieved in the last three decades."

In other words, the same fate is being planned for European workers that has been planned for their brothers and sisters in the U.S.: drastic government cutbacks in basic services, more unemployment, intensified racism (already seen in England and in the superexploitation of immigrant workers everywhere else), fascist terror to prevent class struggle, and war to redivide the spoils.

All of these developments are inevitable under the capitalist system. Profits and crisis – boom, bust, then war – go hand in hand. European workers have already paid dearly for two world wars and one experience of fascism. It is unlikely that they can prevent the next war, *but they have a lot to say about what happens after it.* What will emerge from World War III: capitalist "reindustrialization" amid the rubble and along with it all of the contradictions that would make a *fourth* world war inevitable, or communism – state power in the hands of the working class?

Like ourselves, the workers of Europe can choose between these two alternatives. The only way out of fascism and war is proletarian dictatorship. The only way to win it is to build the Progressive Labor Party – here and in Europe – *now.*

The Battle of Silver-Fin Lake

Long ago there was a sparkling blue lake nestled in the middle of a beautiful green meadow. The meadow, with its tall grasses, was a favorite home of many mice, deer and birds. The lake was the home of many bright silvery fish. The fish were happy in their cool clear world. They slept and played and ate in the fresh water and yet never noticed the liquid that gave them life. Like the air that people used to live in and breathe, the clear water was invisible as it flowed around fish, plants and rocks alike. The fish didn't even know what water was. It was simply "the stuff that the sky danced upon and the ground slept under." These fish never noticed how considerately they treated each other because they had never seen selfishness or meanness. All fish had always been equal to each other, so it had never occurred to any of them that one fish should have more to eat or a better home rock than another. They had always been healthy and strong, so they didn't know what sickness was. "God smiles on us," they would say to each other, "because we remind him of the shiny twinkle in his eye."

But this is not a story about happy, healthy fish. This is a story about poison. This is about a poison that sickens fish minds and makes each one think only of itself – a poison, created by greed, that leaves a fish sick with suspicion and selfishness. The poison also makes for weak fins that are easily torn and for sores that burn into once-proud scales. But these physical pains are nothing compared to the misery endured by the fish who no longer care for each other, and who fight over food and home rocks. This is also a story about how the poison creates the conditions for its own destruction. This, then, is a story about a poison's poison.

By V.C.

But how did the poison come to Silver-Fin Lake? It came on a day when dark clouds hid all the sun's rays from the blue lake. It started with a bright young man who spotted the lake from a nearby path. He walked briskly over to the side of the lake. "What a perfect place to build my sausage factory!" he said as he looked up from the lake to the rushing stream that poured into the lake. "I can use the stream to power my machines and the water will carry the wastes from the factory into the sea. That will save me a lot of money, and soon I will become rich!"

The man was startled to hear a voice above him say, "You will ruin this place if you do all that." The young man looked up to see an owl sitting on an oak tree branch above him. He scowled at the bird and answered sharply, "Too bad! I own this land, and I can do with it as I wish. You are only a stupid bird! What do you know of progress and industry? Get out of here, before I have you stuffed and mounted!" But the owl only glared at the man, who turned with an air of self-importance and stomped back to the path.

Time passed, as it always does, forward into the next day and into the next year. Its passing was used wisely by the industrious young man, who did indeed build his factory. He began to make a good profit and hired other men to do all the work of making the sausages. Once a week he would go into the city and wisely invest his profits in other industries.

But just as the bear must smash open the beehive to get honey, so did the factory owner necessarily destroy land and water to make profits. Not suddenly, but quietly, like an evil mist, the wastes from the sewers of the factory twisted and turned into the cool water of the lake. Slowly. No one noticed the crystal blue turning to still gray. None of the fish, in their span of life, could see the sadness engulfing them. Several generations passed. Bugs began to avoid the murky banks of the lake. Food became scarce. The poisoned water clouded fish eyes, so that they no longer saw each other clearly. No one noticed as selfishness replaced cooperation. As the murky wastes folded further into the lake, fish gills were clogged, so that fish could no longer speak or hear each other clearly. And no one noticed as selfishness replaced friendship. No one ever noticed because it all happened so slowly. And it also happened to the water that the fish never noticed. Of course, all the fish knew that they were unhappy and cut off from each other. But for each of them, it had *always* been that way.

A few fish tried to find happiness by taking food and home rocks from their neighbors. These fish ate better, but lived with even more fear than those they had stolen from. They were hated by the others. Most fish just tried to get enough so their families could survive another day. They searched endlessly for bugs, always fearful that another fish would find them first. When two fish happened upon a bug at the same time, a fight was certain to give the bug to the meanest or most desperate fish. "You must look out for number one," they would tell themselves sadly. One no longer saw schools of fish swimming together. Each fish was either alone or with its own little family.

Not even the oldest fish in the lake knew that the poison was all around them and in them. They could not see the poison because they had never been away from it for even a moment. They only knew that food was hard to find and that their sores gave them much pain. "What a sad and mean world we live in," one would say.

"Why is God so cruel to us?" another would ask.

"We must have done something terrible to deserve such a sad life."

"This is just the way things are," they would answer each other without much thought.

SPOT ON TOP LOOKS OUT OF THE LAKE

There was one fish who would not pay any attention to such talk. He hated to see fish being mean to each other. Spot-on-Top, as he was called because of a large brown sore on his back, was not one to let life's troubles get him down. He loved adventure. He was one of the few fish who had ventured far downstream to the end of the world. He loved to tell other fish about the way the water crashed about on the rocks as it rushed toward its end. His eyes would get big and he would wave his fins wildly as he told his terrified listeners about how the world fell off suddenly over the edge of smooth rocks. He would add that he was almost swept over the edge, but that was not quite true. Spot-on-Top was one fish who had many friends. He was always urging them to join him in some adventure. He would not fight over food bugs. "I would rather fight a fisherman for a hook than a fish for a worm," he would say. He would sometimes

SILVER-FIN LAKE

dream of a lake where all fish were friends. One fantasy of his was to trick all the fish into working together in order to stop a sea monster from eating them all up. But nothing ever came of that silly plan, because sea monsters were hard to come by in Silver-Fin Lake. But he was right about one thing – if you have something that you have to fight, it makes sense to unite.

One day Spot-on-Top was swimming near the edge of the lake. He was looking for an occasional bug that ventured near the water surface. Suddenly, he was startled to see a large shape move above the water. He poked his head out and saw a big owl pacing around on an empty oil drum.

"How do you like this lake now?" asked the owl, looking at Spot-on-Top intently.

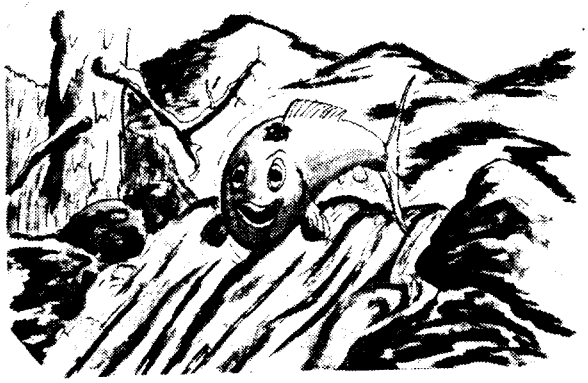
"What do you mean *now*?" It seemed a very strange question to Spot-on-Top.

"Don't you know that this used to be the most beautiful lake in the world?" asked the owl, who had seen more of this part of the hills than most. "Now look at it! Full of poison from that damned factory over there."

"Poison? What's that?" asked Spot-on-Top. He had never heard of such stuff. But he was becoming curious, since this big bird seemed to know something new about his world. "And what's this factory thing you're ranting about?" he said, as he turned in the direction the owl was pointing. He gasped when he saw the huge dark jumble of buildings, trucks and smoe stacks that stretched along a third of the lake.

"See that tube running from that shack there into the water, young fish? What do you think that is, a hollow log?" the owl said sharply. "You should stick your head out of the water more often and look at what is going on!"

"What do you think that old tube has to do with my world?" Spot-on-Top was becoming tired of this old owl's rude comments. As he turned to duck back under the water, he was followed by one last jibe from the owl.



"Live in the garbage if you want. It's up to you, fish-face!"

"What a cantankerous old Feather-Fluff," Spot-on-Top thought as he swam towards home. Still, he was bothered by the fact that the bird had pointed out the factory to him. "I didn't know that big ugly thing was there. That old owl knows something, much as I hate to admit it. I think I'll just have a quick look at that tube the bird was so riled up about."

As he headed in the direction of the factory, he saw his friend Half-Fin looking for bugs among the rocks. Spot-on-Top told his friend of his strange conversation with the owl and asked Half-Fin to join him in his journey to the pipe.

"I have no time for such foolishness as that," Half-Fin said impatiently. "I have to keep looking for food to feed my family. It seems to get harder and harder every day," he said, swimming off.

"He may be right," thought Spot-on-Top to himself. "But still, that darned bird has got my curiosity up. I can't forget about this thing until I do some investigation on my own." So he swam on and on, right into a shallow area of the lake, where neither he nor any other fish he knew had ventured before. As he searched along the bank of the lake among rocks and tall grasses, he became aware that the water was getting darker and darker. Soon he was unable to see more than a few centimeters ahead of himself. There was no grass at all in this awful water.

"This place gives me the creeps," he thought as he was about to turn back. Then he saw it. Or rather, he felt it. A thick warm fluid with bits of garbage in it was rushing all around him. Spot-on-Top choked and rolled over as he struggled to get away from the force of the murky current. Abruptly, he was out of the current and could see the smooth surface of a round

rusty tube just above him. He swam along the tube for a meter or so, and sure enough, it rose above the surface of the water.

"That's it! Spot-on-Top said excitedly, "But I can't hang around in this muck any longer! I'm beginning to feel bad." Ugly pictures flashed through his head. He saw himself biting his sister to make her bring him a bug. Then he suddenly imagined a dozen Trout like himself chasing a Catfish away from his home rock. Spot-on-Top shook his head violently and didn't stop his headlong retreat until he was halfway home. "Boy, what an awful place," he thought, shuddering

That night he called some of his friends together and told them of his talk with the owl and his trip to the tube. "That old bird wasn't as crazy as he loked," Spot-on-Top told them firmly. "The water around that tube was terrible! It's true that the pipe is doing something to our water. We have to stop it before our lake is completely unlivable."

"What a bunch of crazy talk! There is nothing wrong with our lake," said old No-Back-Fin. "I have lived longer than any of you, and I know it has always been just as it is now. And it will always be as it is now."

"You are just trying to blame your troubles on something you can't do anything about," said One-Eye. "This idle talk of a poison in our water is foolish. If there were such stuff we would surely be able to see it right here."

"But I did see some kind of dark ugly stuff coming out of that pipe!" Spot-on-Top shot back hotly. "I don't know why we can't see it here. But I know that there is nothing stopping it from getting here. I got there and back. The stuff made me feel irritable and kind of crazy."

"If Spot-on-Top says something bad is coming out of that tube, I believe him," said One-Fin-Gone. She was a fish who had always been quite a fighter, but since she had become friends with Spot-on-Top she had not started a fight over food. Nevertheless, she still made quick work of any fish foolish enough to challenge her. She liked Spot-on-Top's spirit and joined him on several adventures. Spot-on-Top liked One-Fin-Gone because of the way she faced problems head on. They were the best of friends. "Like Spot-on-Top says, that owl knows something," she added. "We should at least look into the whole thing."

"You are both crazy," snapped No-Back-Fin. "But not by any stuff from a tube. You two spend too much time idly dreaming when you should be looking for food."

"If, as you say, Spot-on-Top, this stuff is thick around the tube, it must indeed be in the rest of our lake," said quiet little One-Gil. She had lost one of her gills to disease when she was quite young. Spot-on-Top and One-Fin-Gone liked her because she could make even the smallest thing seem interesting and important when she talked. "Maybe we can't see this poison because we grew up in it. We are partly made up of the stuff. It is insie of us.," she said with disgust. "Spot-on-Top only noticed it because he saw a lot of it at one time."

There was a pause as they all thought about the idea that they could be made up of something bad. "You said that stuff made you a litle crazy. What did it do?"

Spot-on-Top told them of how he had suddenly thought of biting his sister and chasing the Catfish. "Sorry," he said with a shrug to One-Fin-Gone. "I didn't *want* to think such garbage. It just popped into my mind." One-Fin-Gone was a Catfish.

"I wonder if there could be a connection between all those crazy thoughts and all the trouble we have between Trout and Catfish," said One-Gill thoughtfully. Many Trout blamed the Catfish for eating all the good bugs. This, of course, was a lie since there were many more Trout than Catfish in the lake. The truth was that there were good bug areas of the lake that Catfish did not dare swim in for fear of being attacked by Trout. Catfish actually got less bugs than would be their fair share.

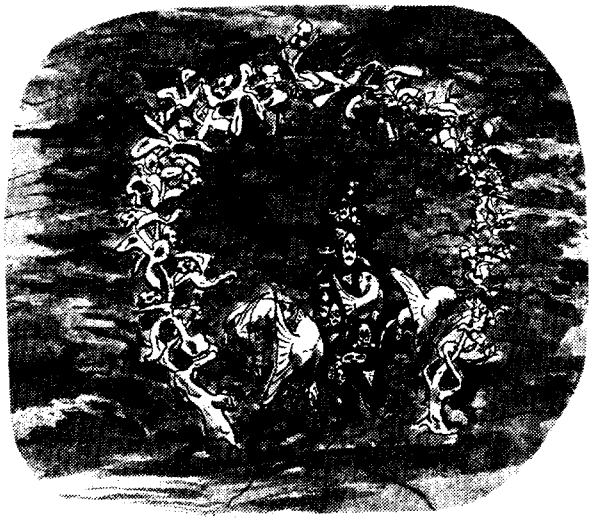
"We have to stop that stuff from coming into our lake," growled One-Fin- Gone angrily.

"You would do better to look after your family, One-Fin-Gone. They won't get fed by hanging around here," answered No-Back-Fin with a tired expression on his face. And with those parting words, he and One-Eye swam off.

"Well," said One-Fin-Gone without looking at the two departing fish, "there are still three of us who want to do something. We will help, but what can we do?"

"I didn't think much of it at the time," said, "but about a week ago I met a fish from the other side of the lake. He told me he lived by a spring in a small inlet. That fish asked me how I could stand living in such an ugly lake, or something like that. Before I could ask him what he meant he saw that I have only one gill and made a fuss. He backed away as if I were some kind of freak. He told me to keep away from him and took off like a scared minnow."

"They don't sound too likeable," said Spot-on-Top, "but they may be able to help us. Tomor-



row, You can take us to where you think they live." They all agreed to meet at One-Gill's rock early the next morning.

At sunrise the three of them were joined by a little friend of One-Gill's named Split-Fin. Split-fin was a practical joker and always loved to play tricks on his friends. Once he pulled some junk and old boots together from the lake bottom and convinced several fish that he had pulled a fisherman into the lake.

One-Gill took them all across the lake away from the pipe. After many hours of futile searching they could find no trace of an inlet or spring.

"I'm tired," said little Split-Fin, "and I've got to find some food. I'm so hungry I could eat a fat hook!" The other three agreed to stop and look for food. After a few minutes of poking around the rocks, Spot-on-Top suddenly stopped. He could feel a faint bit of cool water as it flowed over the sensitive spot on his back. "I may have found something!" he called out to the others. By very carefully tracing the source of the cool water, they soon came upon a small **V** shape in the gentle curve of the lake bank.

THE SPRING-FISH

The four friends stared in disbelief. The tiny inlet was jammed full of fish. They were literally stacked one upon another. But even more startling was a wreath of twigs and water flowers that surrounded the entrance to the inlet. The intricate weave of flowers was the most beautiful thing any of the friends had ever seen. They stared at it in wonder. Bright yellow and reds dotted a dark green background of leaves. The lattice of twigs was solid on the bottom, but gradually became light and almost danced among the flowers at the top of the entrance.

The friends' spell was broken by voices from the center.

"Go away, you're sick."

"No room in here!," another cried anxiously.

No room, no room!" called out the others.

"Shut up, you stupid sardines, said One-Fin-Gone angrily. "We don't want to get in that can with you."

"We want you to help us find a way to clean up our lake," said Spot-on-Top patiently.

"Beat it, 'Sick-Spot'. I don't care what you do with that damned lake!" said the first fish.

"You are a fool to think you can clean up a lake," said the second fish. "The best thing you can do is find yourselves a spring like this one and stay in it."

"Now, get out of here before you spread your sickness to us," said the third spring fish.

"O.K., that does it!" yelled One-Fin-Gone. "Either you tell us what this spring thing is that you love so much, or we will pull you out of there and give you some sore spots you will never forget."

At that the third fish jumped back into the huddle of heads and tails and was not seen again.

"All right, all right," said the first fish, pleading for calm. "The spring is simply water that comes from the hills far away from this lake. The water is clear and sweet, but there is very little of it, as you can see. It keeps us from getting some of the sicknesses common in the lake. But even with this spring, we still get a lot of water in here from the lake. There is no keeping it out. There you have it. Now will you leave us alone?"

"Gladly," said Split-Fin rolling his eyes at the spring fish and jerking around in an exaggerated comic fashion that he imagined a very sick fish might act like. "Oh, my aching back," he said, laughing. After the friends had gone a few meters in silence, he said to Spot-on-Top, They may be able to keep from getting sore spots and torn fins, but their heads are as sick as any I've seen. I don't see how fish like that could build such a beautiful archway."

"I don't want to live like that," answered Spot-on-Top. "It seems to drive a fish crazy. But we did learn something from them. This water direct from the hills is good for our health. We need to get more of that and less of the stuff from the pipe."

The next morning the four friends were joined by Five-Spots, who had heard about their trip to the spring from Spot-on-Top and wanted to help. He was a large and aggressive fish who had built up the largest pile of home rocks in the lake. He said he was glad to see some fish trying to improve the entire lake. Five-Spots was proud of his own achievements but did not think much of other fish who he thought were lazy and foolish.

He lived in the area of the lake where only

Trout made their homes. He was quick to note that he personally would welcome Catfish in the area. But he believed that change could only come slowly since "all fish seem to be happier with others they know best." Five-Spots was indeed very friendly to One-Fin-Gone when they were introduced.

"As I see it," said Spot-on-Top, beginning their meeting, "we must either try to find a lot more spring water or find a way to stop that tube from bringing more poison into our lake."

"I say we look for more spring water," said Five-Spots loudly, nudging Spot-on-Top to the side. "I doubt that we can do anything about that tube. But if we find some spring water, that will help us all right away."

"I don't agree," said One-Fin-Gone. "Even if we find several springs it won't help our lake much. Look, whatever water is coming in is already here and it is not doing much good. At best we will wind up hiding in some tiny hole like those sardines we saw yesterday. We have to try to stop that tube. It's our only hope of saving our whole lake."

"You clearly don't understand the situation at all," said Five-Spots politlely. "Be realistic, that tube was put there by men." He was becoming agitated.

They were all silent at that. It was true, the tube was man's business. They had all avoided thinking about that fact. But now Five-Spots had brought it out in the open. Little was known about men except that they were gigantic shapes that moved above the water. They were the most terrifying fish killers. Somehow they were able to use mysterious forces to snatch up many fish who were never to be seen again.

"Well," said Spot-on-Top, speaking slowly, "I don't care if we do have to take on something made by man. Stopping that tube is the right thing to do. We know it's the only way to save our lake. We can't wish the tube away. We must now figure out a way to stop it."

Again, no one spoke right away. They were beginning to see that they were pulling themselves into a difficult and maybe even dangerous mission. Nor could they quit now, without feeling that they were letting themselves and their friends down. Yet the task they were setting themselves seemed suddenly overwhelming.

Spot-on-Top looked around at the silent faces of his friends. "O.K.," he said firmly, "we will take one step at a time and do the best we can. We will meet each day and see what we have done and talk over what we can reasonably do next. It will be hard, but then so is living in this poison and doing nothing!" He paused for a moment. "Now let's hear ideas on how to stop that pipe."

"I have an idea," said One-Gill. The others turned to her, relieved at getting on to more concrete subjects. "You know when it rains and the lake swells up so we can find many new bugs in the rocks along the edge of the lake? I noticed that each time it rains, sticks and grass pile up down by where the water empties out of our lake. Sometimes mud and rocks get caught in the mess so thick that the water can't get through. I know this because I was almost swept over the top of the barrier last year."

"You mean you think we might be able to make such a barrier around the tube?" asked Spot-on-Top excitedly. "That sounds like it might work!"

"We could gather up the sticks and tree branches that have sunk to the bottom of the lake, and jam them inside the tube!" said Split-Fin.. "Then we could push mud and rocks in around those things to fill in the holes." He stretched out his fins and puffed out his cheeks to make it look like he was part of a dam holding back a terrible force.

"Let's get going!" said Spot-on-Top, rolling around. He was dancing with joy at having a solution to their task. The five friends were very happy as they headed towards the tube. Soon they would have their whole lake cleaner than the hole the Spring-Fish lived in. They even forgot their fear of challenging man.

BUILDING THE BARRICADE

After about an hour and a half of swimming toward the tube, the water began to get noticeably darker. Spot-on-Top called on his friends to stop, and said "We will have to do our gathering of sticks around here. Any closer to the tube and we won't be able to see what we're doing."

When they had gathered a big pile of branches and sticks together, they each took one of the bigger pieces in their mouths, and set off again for the tube. "It's going to be hard getting these into the tube. Also, we won't be able to see or hear when we get right near the tube I think we should pick someone to be the lead fish to decide what we need to do from moment to moment. The rest of us should follow what he's doing."

"I think you should do that, Spot-on-Top," said Split-Fin. "You have been here before. You know better what to expect."

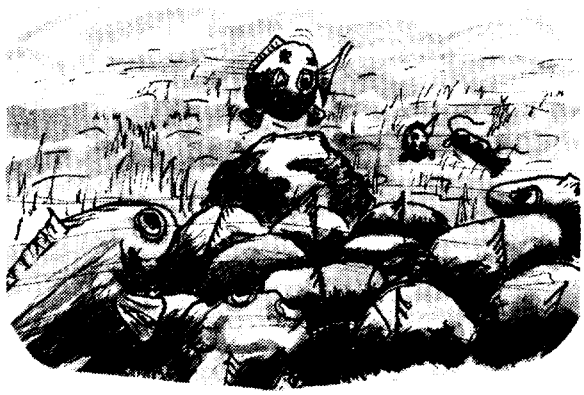
"That's true," said One-Gill.

"You've got the job," said One-Fin-Gone. Five-Spots nodded a silent agreement.

By then the water (if one could call it that) had become so dark that the fish could only see a little way ahead of themselves. "Now stay next to each other in the same order that we are in now!" yelled Spot-on-Top above the roar of the tube. Spot-on-Top led his band of friends along the edge of the rushing current until he felt it

suddenly calm. Feeling the smooth surface of the tube below him, he gently pushed the fish next to him down to feel the tube. Then he dropped his stick and the others did the same. Spot-on-Top then picked up the top stick at one end and lined it up in front of his friends. Then he pulled the friends toward the mouth of the tube. When they hit the current it was like being caught under a giant waterfall. The stick went spinning backwards, with the five fish gasping and knocking about in panic. The roar was awful, and bits of garbage crashed into them wildly! Around and around they spun, away from the tube. But the force of the current lessened, and Spot-on-Top pushed and shoved on the stick until it stopped spinning. Together they got the stick moving forward again. The force was terrible, but they inched forward, push by push. Spot-on-Top thought they would never make it when suddenly he bumped his head on something hard and smooth.

"We are inside the tube," he thought dizzily. "Now to wedge this stick tight and get out of here!" Those awful ideas began popping into his mind again as they had the first time he visited the tube. He noticed how irritated he felt to-



wards One-Fin-Gone, even though he was sure she was doing her part with the stick.

He held his end of the stick against the side of the tube and pushed the fish next to him. Slowly, his friends inched to the other end. In a second he felt the stick hit the opposite wall of the tube. Spot-on-Top held on to his end with all his might until he felt the stick bend slightly as it was jammed into position by the others. He waited a moment and then let go of his end. It held!

He quickly fought his way to where the others were holding the stick and pushed them to leave. When Spot-on-Top found his way back to the top of the pipe, the others were waiting for him with another stick. He felt his way along with his friends to the place. "But I can only feel three others here! Someone is missing! What should I do? We can't look for anyone now without us all getting lost," he thought in panic. He realized the others knew what had happened and wanted to keep going. "We have to finish this job." Grimly he pushed the next stick off the pile into the current. When the four finished with the last stick on the pile, they were completely exhausted. Slowly, they returned to where they had piled up their supply of branches. To their joy, there was One-Gill resting on the pile of sticks.

"I'm terribly sorry I let you down," she said, "but I was knocked off the stick when we first hit the current. Something tore my left fin, and I can't swim in a straight line anymore. It's odd, but I felt like I was bitten by a fish."

We are only too glad to see you alive, One-Gill," said Spot-on-Top. "We were worried sick about you. But we did it! We did it! We got all our sticks in place! In a few more days we will be done. The lake will be good for fish again."

"We need to hurry," said One-Fin-Gone. "I got some creepy thoughts when I was in that tube," she said, looking at the others apologetically. "That tube *is* poisoning us."

In the following days, the work at the pipe moved along swiftly. As the story of their project spread, new fish joined them every day. Discussions were starting up all over the lake about this mysterious pipe. Fish argued hotly about whether the stuff from the pipe was poison or not. Some said the whole project was just the idle doings of a few fish who didn't want to work at looking for food. Others said that the pipe, like everything else in the lake, had a right to be there. A few said it was a "fly in the sky" idea to think that little fish could stop a man-made thing. Some fish, a few that nobody liked, even went so far as to say that the poison was good because it eliminated weak fish that shouldn't be around anyway. Nevertheless, by the seventh day, when the tube was finally jammed up as best as could be done, there were no less than thirty-one fish who had worked on the task!

"I would estimate that we have cut down on the amount of stuff coming out of that pipe by about fifty or sixty percent," Five-Spots told the crowd at the celebration party. He had volunteered to make the formal speech. Everyone agreed he was particularly good with words. "That may not seem like a lot at first, but I think we will see a real improvement in our lake in a few weeks. Already we can see three or four centimeters in the area around the tube. We have stopped the big stuff. Only half the liquid and tiny bits of garbage are getting through. We can be be very proud of our work. I am volunteering to be in charge of the daily maintenance on the Barricade. Maybe that way I can make up for not thinking this project was a good one at first," he said with a wink towards One-Fin-Gone.

It was a great party. Everyone danced late into the night. Spirits were high. Fish had worked together and done something that made everyone's lives better! Nobody felt the sores on

their bodies that night. The laughter and singing could be heard all the way across the lake. The Spring-Fish in their tiny hole weren't able to sleep a wink. "Those fools have gone crazy," they told themselves.

The following days proved, however, that it was too soon for celebrations. The barricade was constantly coming apart in bits and pieces. Every day, Five-Spots called on teams of fish to help repair the barricade. It was dangerous work. Several fish suffered broken fins and cuts from sharp bits of garbage that broke through the dam. Sure enough, the water around the tube did clear a little. One could see for five or six centimeters after about three months. So, the barricade was helping the lake water some.

Still, One-Fin-Gone was dissatisfied. "We are doing a tremendous amount of work and suffering a lot of injuries, and yet I don't think we are stopping more than a third of that poison," she complained.

"I'm afraid you're right," answered Spot-on-Top. "The whole thing is taking its toll on Five-Spots also. He is overworked and becoming terribly impatient. He orders the work teams around as if he were some kind of big Salmon. He acts as if the whole project is his personal property and he won't let anybody else make suggestions. He has a few supporters, but many fish are getting very angry with his domineering manners. I know I should have said something about this before. But Five-Spots has been such a good friend...," he trailed off. "I just hate to say anything bad about him."

"I have been wanting to talk to you about Five-Spots myself," said One-Fin-Gone. "We have been bringing him and his assistants food every day. I can understand that they have no time to look for any themselves. But lately they have demanding more and more bugs. I don't know what they are doing with all the food we give them. They couldn't eat half the stuff by themselves.

"It sounds like we have let things get out of hand," Spot-on-Top answered sternly. "I haven't been any better challenging the selfish direction Five-Spots has taken. We have let an old friendship threaten the well-being of our other friends. We must visit Five-Spots immediately and suggest that he take a vacation from his responsibilities."

The pair had not gone but a few score meters when suddenly the water turned dark and murky. Bits of garbage floated past them such as they had not seen since the barricade was first built. "Something is terribly wrong," Spot-on-Top said anxiously. The two pushed ahead as fast as they could.

Suddenly a fish appeared and crashed into One-Fin-Gone before either fish could move aside. He was bleeding from a large cut on his belly. "The Barricade has been destroyed!" he cried out in anguish. "Two fish working on repairs today were killed! Maybe more. The place is full of garbage and poison."

"How did this happen?" demanded Spot-on-Top trying to calm down the frantic fish.

"A man came into the water and pulled everything out of the tube. It happened so fastr that many of us were trapped inside. Little Split-Fin was crushed under some stones when he and I tried to get out!"

"Split-Fin killed!" One-Fin-Gone cried out in horror.

"And someone else. But I couldn't see who," said the fish.

Spot-on-Top and One-Fin-Gone continued on in silence. The water became darker and darker. Only the experience of traveling to Five-Spots' office rock many times before helped them find their way. When they got there, they found him and three of his assistants talking loudly.

"We must make the teams – the work schools – compulsory," said one of the assistants.

"And these four-hour shifts aren't enough. We need each shift to work eight hours at a stretch," said another through his teeth.

"I say we put an end to all this constant complaining and slow work by bringing in some..." The third assistant stopped talking when he saw Spot-on-Top and One-Fin-Gone swimming toward them.

"We just heard of the disaster the man caused, Five-Spots," said Spot-on-Top. "Who else was killed besides Split-Fin?"

"Why, I haven't heard myself," Five-Spots answered, glancing at the faces of his assistants. "There are so many urgent matters to consider just now."

"This barricade project doesn't seem to be working like we hoped," said One-Fin-Gone. "We are going to have to think of more drastic measures."

"Nonsense!" answered Five-Spots angrily. "We will rebuild the barricade immediately. We are not giving up! Every time a man breaks up our work, we will rebuild," he said defiantly. "After all, there is no point in blaming man for what has happened. He was just looking after his own business. Now, if you two will excuse us, we must make plans for tomorrow."

"Well, to tell you the truth, Five-Spots, we came here to suggest that you step aside as maintenance chief. Fish are complaining about the way you treat them."

"You've got your nerve!"said one of the assistants, coming up to Spot-on-Top's face.

"Five-Spots has worked his tail off all these weeks and now you come along and want to get rid of him in this time of crisis? No way!" yelled

a second assistant, also swimming in front of Spot-on-Top.

"I will be more than happy to take a vacation as you suggest, Spot-on-Top, but not now. I will have to put off this much-needed rest until matters here are...ah...stabilized. Now really, my fiends, we must get back to work. If you want to help, please tell the work-school leaders to report to me first thing tomorrow."

After they had swum a few feet from Five-Spots' rock, One-Fin-Gone said "Five-Spots and his partners have been spending too much time in this thick poison." She wrinkled her nose and added, "He needs to get away from this stinky stuff. It's true, he has done a lot to keep the barricade repaired, but that does not in any way give him the right to set himself above the rest of us. We have all worked hard."

"You're right about this poison," Spot-on-Top replied. "The longer we fight it, the better I realize that this poison makes fish turn against fish. The more poison a fish swims in, the more selfish and mean he becomes. Five-Spots and his three friends have all spent more time than most near the pipe. That is where the poison is thickest. The tube is not only making our bodies sick, but worse yet, it is driving us crazy!"

"On the other fin," said One-Fin-Gone, "the fish on the work schools are getting along better with each other than are any of the fish who refused to help on the tube. There are no fights between Trout and Catfish on the work schools, like we see in some parts of the lake. While we have been working, we have been forced to help each other. None of us can get the sticks in the tube without help. We have even been sharing our food with each other, since we developed the system where one work school gathers food for the schools working on the repairs and another school watches the children while the rest of us work. It really gives me a wonderful feeling that I can't quite explain. But I notice that the fish who don't want to work with us are still staying by themselves or fighting each other over bugs."

"Living in this poison seems to drive us into sickness, while fighting it makes us healthier," said Spot-on-Top philosophically. "Let's go look at the damage around the tube. Maybe we'll think of something."

Spot-on-Top led the way back to the pipe. Soon the water was dark and thick with garbage. One could see only a couple of centimeters ahead. "It is very near here," said One-Fin-Gone. They swam back and forth blindly, bumping into bits of scraps from the factory. The smell of fish blood still hung in the water. The broken evidence of man's presence lay scattered about the lake bottom. The sticks, rocks and grass that once had held back the wastes now lay in a useless jumble in the dim light of the dark waters.

Suddenly, Spot-on-Top cried out, "What the...Did you see that?"

"No, what?"

"Some kind of weird fish just darted past my face. Its eyes were sunk deep into its head. It was hideous!"

"Probably just a piece of garbage. This place gives me the creeps, too," said One-Fin-Gone, sympathetically. They moved closer together and continued their search.

"Yeeyoww! Something bit me!" Spot-on-Top cried out in pain. "Something got my tail fin and jerked me back. Let's get out of here!" The two turned and hurried away from the area of the pipe as fast as they could swim. They had not gone far when they came upon a horrible sight they would never be able to forget. Directly in their path stood a crooked pole upright in the muddy lake floor. Mounted on top was a ghostly white fish skull. It stared out at the two friends with vacant eyes. They were motionless for several moments until Spot-on-Top regained his voice. "Something terrible is going on around here. We had better report back to the others. We are going to need a lot of help." The two friends hurried back to their home rocks as quickly as possible.

Discussions sprang up all over the lake as word of the horrible events spread from fish to fish. "It all goes to show we should never interfere with man's work," one would say. "We should drown all the men we can get into the water," another would boldly answer. "Who would do such a thing as to put a fish skull on a pole?" one would ask. "Something terribly twisted must live out there by the pipe," another would answer. "Should we just learn to live with the poison as best we can?" one more would ask. "We must do *something*, now that we know what the pipe is doing to us," still another answered. A number of fish noted that "it was a Catfish skull on that pole." Some said it with shame and bewilderment, some with anger in their eyes, and a few others said it without concern.

FIVE-SPOTS' NEW PLAN

Five-Spots, as usual, ignored all the talk and organized to keep everyone busy. He demanded that all fish between two and five years old take part in the rebuilding of the barricade. Each work school was to work eight hours with half an hour for food. Five-Spots grew more aloof from the other fish in the weeks that followed. He demanded ever more bugs for himself and his assistants. "It's only fair that we have some reward for our sacrifices and leadership," he would insist when questioned. The work on the tube was even more dangerous than before. Five-Spots never seemed to assign enough fish to do a job safely. The long hours made for more accidents when fish got tired. The lunch food allotments seemed to get smaller, even though the schools that gathered lunch for everyone insisted that they brought enough for everyone when they turned their work over to Five-Spots' assistants.

The worst development, however, was the regular appearance of the horrible fish that had attacked Spot-on-Top earlier. There seemed to be several sunken-eyed fish who would attack suddenly and then just as quickly disappear in the murky distance. One attacker had been heard to shout "Trout Power" and "Catfish Back to the Sea!" as he swam away. Three Catfish so far had been badly hurt by these mysterious hit-and-run bullies. Several fish, including One-Gill, demanded that Five-Spots organize a defense team to fend off the attackers. Five-Spots agreed, but never actually got around to doing more than sending out an assistant to investigate. "The strange fish are a tiny problem, compared to the problem of stopping the tube," he would reply when pressed to do something. The strain of the work was taking its toll on Five-Spots. Dark circles had appeared under his eyes and those of his assistants.

Four weeks after the barricade was torn down, Five-Spots called a meeting of all the work school leaders. "You will all be pleased to know that I have devised a plan for the tube that is sure to prevent man from again destroying our work." Five-Spots spoke from a perch well above the team leaders. "Instead of completely damming up the tube, we will only try to stop the big stuff that we can't move. The small pieces of garbage we will push to the other side, where the water leaves the lake. It takes a lot of work, but we will be rid of it for good." He paused as several of his friends flapped their fins wildly in appreciation.

"Wait a minute," said Half-Fin, who had joined the work on the barricade a week after it was first begun. He was very aware that he was the only Catfish among the work-school leaders. "Your plan still leaves us the poison fluid, which is the most important stuff to stop. That's the

stuff that poisons our minds!"

"Well, we can't stop the fluid without the men coming down on us," Five-Spots shot back angrily. "We have to work with man on this thing. That is all there is to it. I certainly don't like the limitations any more than you do."

Half-Fin was not one to be easily intimidated. He was getting angry at Five-Spots' tone. "Your plan sounds like it will just make the man's sewage system work better. Who are you working for – men or fish?"

"O.K., Half-Fin, if you don't like our plan, you may leave," said Five-Spots with a smile. With these words, three of his assistants advanced upon Half-Fin menacingly. "I'm sure if Half-Fin has a chance to think over his demoralizing and divisive statements for a few days , he will come to his senses," Five-Spots said, motioning for his friends to stop.

"You better leave," whispered a very cautious fish next to Half-Fin. "We'll talk to you tonight after work."

But no one ever talked to Half-Fin again. His body was found torn and battered the next day by a work school assigned to ferry bits of garbage across the lake. There could be no mistake about it. The marks on his body had been made by fish.

A new fear gripped the lake.

Who had murdered Half-Fin? Of course, many suspected it was the work of Five-Spots. But Five-Spots paid all the expenses of Half-

Fin's funeral event, and volunteered to supply food for the dead father's children. Speaking before the large funeral crowd, Five-Spots loudly instructed his assistants to avenge Half-Fin's death. No one dared to accuse Five-Spots openly. No one openly said anything bad about "The Big Fish," as his assistants liked to call him.

Skull-Fish, as the sunken-eyed bullies were now called, became ever more present. For a week they raided the tiny inlet where the Spring-Fish lived. Each night, the Skull-Fish, shouting "Trout Power!" and "Down With the Springwater Worms," would surround the tiny spring and pull several helpless fish from their hideaway. Torn and bruised, the bewildered fish would finally agree to leave their springwater home. The Skull-Fish had torn down the beautiful wreath in front of the inlet on their first raid. Since they had always kept to themselves and even scorned the rest of the lake, nobody came to the aid of the Spring-Fish. Still, many fish felt bad about what was happening. "Who will those mean fish go after next?" thought many a fish.

Drunk with their victory the Skull-Fish began to move during the night into the rest of the lake. They always traveled in schools of four or more. When they came upon a group of fish talking together, the Skull-Fish would attack and break up the meeting. It was hard to say for sure, but besides Catfish and Spring-Fish, they seemed to attack those fish who were known to be hostile to Five-Spots. Five-Spots, however, claimed that the Skull-Fish were agents sent by men and would attack him as soon as they felt strong enough to go against his bodyguards. First one, and then several skull-topped poles began to appear around the lake. A few were unmistakably Trout skulls. The sight of the grisly markers sent terror through the lake.

Five-Spots decided that the excesses of the Skull-Fish were due to provocations by a few "irresponsible fish," who had on occasion chased the Skull-Fish away from their home rocks. Five-Spots ordered Spot-on-Top, One-Fin-Gone, One-Gill and about seven other fish to his headquarters for questioning. But all of these fish had disappeared. Disappeared from Five-Spots, that is, but not from their friends. Secretly they were attending meetings all over the lake. Some of the meetings even took place near the pipe, right under Five-Spots' nose.

Meanwhile, the water in the lake had become increasingly murky. Nowhere in the lake could one see very far. The grasses began to die, and there were fewer and fewer bugs to be found. As in the past, when two fish happened upon a piece of food simultaneously, they would fight bitterly – sometimes even to the death.

"What a shame," said One-Gill, when six of Spot-on-Top's friends met to discuss what to do about Five-Spots. "We were so happy when we were working together on the first barricade. Now look. Everywhere fish are more afraid and hungrier than ever before. Trout and Catfish keep to themselves almost completely. We are all being turned against each other as this poison gets thicker and thicker! The Skull-Fish are just the worst. One-Gill looked tired and seemed to be under a terrible strain. "You know, it hurts me to see fish gulp down such stupid ideas. I like to believe that we are above such mud..." she trailed off absently.

"I got a report," said One-Fin-Gone, "that Five-Spots ordered that only female fish can watch the children and gather food, while only males can work on the barricade. It's a shame, but the work schools have already let him divide them up like that." She was clearly angry. "How could any fish believe in such garbage!"

Spot-on-Top spoke bitterly. "Five-Spots and his Skullers always look for ways to keep us fighting each other or at least separated. I'm sure they are afraid of us. They know that if we ever get together we could run the bunch of them over the world!"

"We must fight and kill those Skull-Fish!" said One-Fin-Gone hotly. "We can never let them bully us! I have talked to a lot of fish that want to fight!"

"I think we should go and talk to that owl again," said Spot-on-Top.

"Talk to an owl about what is going on in our water?" asked One-Fin-Gone impatiently. "Are you going crazy on us, too?"

"That owl was the first to tell us about the poison in the water, if you will remember," Spot-on-Top shot back. "There is a good chance that bird will be able to give us some ideas on how to fight."

"We do need a plan to go along with our willingness to fight, said One-Gill looking over at One-Fin-Gone.

"I'm sorry for getting angry, Spot-on-Top," replied One-Fin-Gone. "I'm just getting tired of this hide and seek game we are playing with Five-Spots and his Skull-Worms. Let's go see that bird."

A MEETING WITH A HAWK

When the six friends reached the spot where Spot-on-Top had talked with the owl, they poked their heads out of the water and looked around. Spot-on-Top quickly spotted a hawk seated on a branch near where the owl had perched before. "Hey, hawk – have you seen an owl around here? We want to talk to him."

"Carl died, fish," answered the hawk. "But he told me to expect you. I see you have returned with friends. Very good."

"He told you I would be back?" Spot-on-Top was astonished. "But we only decided a few minutes ago to come here. How is it you birds know so much about us fish?"

"We get around," answered the hawk. "I make it my business to know what everybody is doing. We are all suffering from the same enemy."

"You are bothered by the poison too?" One-Gill blurted out.

"Of course," answered the bird harshly. "Look around, look around!"

True enough, the sky did seem dark even though the sun was well above the horizon.

"I don't see how that tube could be poisoning you land crawlers," said One-Fin-Gone skeptically.

"How does the tube poison you, Hawk?" asked Spot-on-Top, who by now had learned to expect the unexpected from birds.

"The tube is not the problem, dear friends." The hawk was clearly exasperated and shifted his weight from foot to foot. "I wish you all had come sooner. We have wasted so much time."

"Can the comments," interrupted One-Fin-Gone. "Let's hear what the problem is."

"Look, the tube is just a small part of the factory. See how it comes out of the water and goes into that dark gray building?"

"Do we have to fight the whole factory?" One-Gill cried out in despair.

"No,no! No! The factory is just a bunch of buildings and machines. It makes sausages which men like to eat," said the hawk licking his beak. "The factory machines don't decide to make the poison, the owner of the factory does."

Spot-on-Top raised an eyebrow at that notion, which for a fish is no small trick. "The Owner-Man makes poison because he wants to? You think he is trying to drive us crazy and make us sick?"

"Well, yes, in a way," began the hawk. "He makes money by..."

"Yes, it is the men who are our enemy!" interrupted Fin-Gone loudly.

"No, not all the men," said the hawk. He looked at the fish intently and added, "Most of the men who work in that factory hate the owner. They have to work in his poison long hours and very hard. The owner doesn't pay the workers nearly the money they make for him. They are angry."

"How do you know that?" Spot-on-Top could not see how a bird could know that much about men.

"Like I said, I get around," answered the hawk again. He winked. "My business is talking with those who have a need to fight the factory owner."

"All very nice talk, but I don't see us getting any closer to a plan to stop the poison." One-Fin-Gone was always the impatient one.

"Maybe we are getting somewhere, One-Fin-Gone." One-Gill looked at her friend with new hope in her eyes. "The hawk is saying that we have to go beyond the pipe to solve our problem. The pipe is just part of the factory. And if the real problem is the Owner-Man, we won't have to fight the whole factory!"

Spot-on-Top turned back to the hawk. "Are you saying the Worker-Men might help us?"

"And not only the men!" said the hawk, hopping back and forth on the branch. "The mice are with us. And I'm sure some of the birds will join in if they see us get something started!"

"Mice!" Spot-on-Top "I don't want anything to do with them."

"Mice!" Spot-on-Top "I don't want anything to do with them."

"I don't ever want to hear that kind of talk again, fish!" The hawk glared at Spot-on-Top with unexpected anger. "We all need each other – see? We *need* each other! I know the mice are all right because I talk to them every day. You never see them and yet you think you can say what they are like. That is just what the owner's poison does to us. He keeps us weak and divided with his damned poison. You just start working with the mice on this thing. Then you will have some real knowledge about mice. Mice have had a lot of valuable experience fighting back against the owner. I'm serious, fish. If I hear you talking bad about the mice or any of the others involved in this struggle, you can count yourself out of our group."

There was silence at that scolding. Then One-Gill said slowly, "The bird's right, Spot-on-Top. If we are going to take on this Owner-Man, we are going to have to make friends with the mice, birds and even these Worker-Men. You said yourself that it was this poison that turned fish against fish. Now we should not let the Owner-Man poison us against the mice and others who want to fight along with us."

"I see what you mean," said Spot-on-Top. "But I don't think we will really get this poison out of our heads overnight. I agree, we should all work together right away. That will help. What can I say? I'll give it my best fin."

"Now you are fighting poison!" said the hawk, hopping around on his branch.

"But what is this group you mentioned before, bird?" Spot-on-Top was anxious to get on with a plan.

"The Commune," said the hawk. Again, he looked at the fish sternly. Leaning over the water until it looked like he would fall in, he said, "The Commune is our weapon to fight the owner together. We fight with a single plan and can focus all our forces at the owner's weak spot quickly. We call it 'The Commune' because we fiercely insist that all are to be equal during and forever after our fight against the owner. We will govern this land and run the factory for the benefit of everyone and not the profit of a few. No one will be allowed to have more than the next, and no one will be able to lord it over anyone else. We will make sure it stays that way by winning most, if not everybody to fight for the program." The hawk paused for a moment. "Are you with us?" He sat still, eying the fish as only a hawk can do.

"Well, you have just said a beakful, bird. We will have to think about it. You are talking about more than just getting rid of poison in our lake. You are going after the factory and a new social system. It sounds good, but can it work?" I don't know..."

"Count me in," One-Fin-Gone said, surprising the others.. "A fighting organization is just what we need, Spot-on-Top. And isn't it equality we want once we get rid of the poison? I know I will never go back to the way the Spring-Fish or Five-Spots would have us live. You once said, Spot-on-Top, that we must fight the poison no matter how hard it was, because that was the right thing to do. You know that the way Five-Spots went is wrong. We can't allow any special privileges – even for those who work the hardest for the common good. We must fight for equality of work and reward no matter how difficult. That is the only direction left open to us today."

"I'm with you," One-Gill said. "At best, we will win exactly what we want, and at the worst we will get part of the way there. The hawk is right; if we are to get anywhere we need an organization that fights for the highest goal."

"But will the rest understand what we are doing?" Spot-on-Top asked his friends. "Remember how hard it was just to get fish to fight the tube? I'm afraid our friends will turn away from us if we wave such lofty goals in front of them."

"Do you think you're so much smarter than other fish?" asked the hawk angrily. "Do you agree with Five-Spots that other fish need to be led around by the nose? Trust them, Spot-on-Top, and struggle with them as we are doing with you here." He paused to let that barb sink in. "If you go out and aggressively explain what you have learned, your friends will join us. Don't hold back in the name of others, Spot-on-Top."

"Oh, boy, am I getting roasted today!" Spot-on-Top said, managing a smile. "You all are right. I'm sorry for sounding like Five-Spots. So where do we go from here?" he said, turning to the hawk.

The meeting lasted late into the night. The fish asked many questions about the Commune and of the situation inside the factory. How many members did the Commune have? How did they plan to beat the Owner-Man once a fight started? How could the fish, who must stay in the water, help the struggle in the factory? The hawk in turn asked many questions about the conditions in the lake. How many Skull-Fish were there? What was keeping Five-Spots in power? Who supported him? The hawk was very interested to know who the most trusted friends of Spot-on-Top, One-Fin-Gone, and One-Gill were. Which ones would be willing to form Commune schools led by the three friends. Did they have friends who worked every day at the pipe, close to Five-Spots?

Finally the meeting ended, and the three friends said goodbye to the hawk. Just before she ducked under the water, One-Gill suddenly

stopped and turned back to the hawk.

"Just a minute," she said with a trace of suspicion in her voice. "I don't know much about you hawks, but I have heard that you eat little animals like...mice!" The others eyed the hawk nervously.

"I...used to do that, it's true," said the hawk with a sudden show of embarrassment they had not seen before. "But no more. Never again!"

"Then what *do* you eat," asked One-Fin-Gone, quickly.

The hawk began to pace back and forth on the branch. "About a summer ago I caught a mouse from the factory out in the field. I was about to tear into him when suddenly he let out a loud whistle. The next thing I knew there were mice all over me. They had their claws dug into my back, my wings and into my legs. I couldn't fly off or even run. I thought they would tear me apart as they surely could have. I dropped the mouse I had in my beak, but instead of running, he just sat in front of me licking his fur. 'How do you like our little action?' he said to me, calm as can be. Well, I was surprised, to say the least. Right away I had to like this little mouse just for being so brazen. 'Look bird,' he says to me, 'We could use a high-flyer like you.' The mice, he told me, were trying to eke out a living in the factory, eating odds and ends left around. But the Owner-Man was trying to kill them all. Well, to make a long story short, these mice had gotten themselves organized (as I could see from my own predicament) but still the Owner-Man was picking them off one by one. They wanted someone with my eye view of the situation. Someone who could get around. Well, I liked their style, even if they were hanging all over me. I leveled with them. I figured mice like these could take the worst. 'You know I eat mice,' I said. 'No mice to eat, no hawk. It's as simple as that.' He came right back with, 'I think we can work out a deal.' This is how the Commune got started. We began working together, and one thing led to another."

"It's getting late, hawk, and we have a lot to do in the morning. We want to know what you eat if it isn't mice."

"Like fish," said One-Fin-Gone under her breath.

"Why...sausage, of course," said the hawk with a smile. All the hawks around here eat sausage. The mice bring it out for us. You should see the Owner-Man when he sees that! He doesn't know whether to flap his arms like a chicken or stare at us like a stunned cow."

"Good enough for me," said Spot-on-Top.

"Nice story, bird," said One-Fin-Gone, diving under the surface.

"See you later, hawk," said One-Gill, following the others.

As the friends returned home sleepily, Spot-on-Top thought to himself with a smile, "Those Communers leave no stone unturned when it comes to getting organized."

In the next few days the three met secretly with all of their close friends. They carefully related all that had been said between themselves and the hawk. They explained and debated the goals of the Commune with their friends. They sharply fought for the idea of uniting fish, mice, birds and men. Finally, they asked each to join with them and help lead the struggle. To their surprise most of their friends agreed. "If we don't fight now," said Tail-Fin-Torn, "we will surely die of starvation or the poison." He was a new friend of Spot-on-Top, who had barely escaped being killed by the Skull-Fish when they discovered him knocking down one of their gruesome poles. A friend of One-Fin-Gone called Spots-on-Belly sadly agreed with Tail-Fin-Torn. "I only wish that we had done something before my three babies got sick and died." She agreed to get together a meeting of a few of the fish who worked near Five-Spots.

Many fish were interested, but were afraid of becoming more active. On the fourth day, two badly-mauled Skull-Fish were found unconscious, floating in a part of the lake where many fish passed each day, looking for food. Excited rumors sprang up all over the lake. "A giant fish has come from the ocean to save us," said some who had high hopes, but knew little. "Those Commune fish will bring trouble down on all of us," said others who knew more, but had little hope. The attack on the Skull-Fish inspired several fish to become active with the Commune.

Five-Spots was worried. He knew exactly what was happening in the lake. Someone was organizing to challenge his authority. He ordered the arrest of all members of the Commune on grounds that they were disrupting the peace of the lake and the work on the tube. "I am saddened to announce that the Skull-Fish are now entirely in charge of lake security. This decision has been forced upon me by the brutal beating of

two of their members yesterday. I am powerless to do otherwise," he said, glancing at the big sunken-eyed fish floating next to him. "We must pull together in this time of crisis, for the good of the lake. Subversion of our work at the tube cannot be tolerated." The circles under Five-Spots' eyes had deepened.

The next night four fish, known to be critical of Five-Spots, were taken from their home rocks by a large gang of Skull-Fish. "We are taking them away for questioning," they told the angry and frightened neighbors. But the early morning light revealed four skull-topped poles staring out from the spot where the two beaten Skull-Fish had first been discovered. Many fish were terrified by such a vicious display of violence by the Skull-Fish. "We must be careful not to anger those awful fish," said one young fish fearfully. Many more fish were angered by such a cowardly act. "They don't know who got them, so they attack just anybody in order to scare us all," said one fish bitterly.

Two days later, three Skull-Fish were supervising a garbage-ferry work school near where a lot of fish were looking for bugs. One of the fish in the work school, a friend of Spots-on-Belly, looked around as if searching the murky water for some sign. "Keep moving with that garbage," yelled the Skull-Fish nearest her. A few moments later, the little fish dropped her burden and dove downward quickly to retrieve it. "You clumsy fool!" barked the Skull-Fish again. "Get it and..." He never finished his command. Out of nowhere, six fish led by One-Gill and Spots-on-Belly rushed upon the three Skull-Fish and began biting them furiously.

"Join us in teaching these monsters a lesson!" One-Gill shouted to the nearby fish, who watched in amazement. First, two, then three more fish joined in on the fight. Spots-On-Belly's friend returned and soon eight more fish darted in and attacked the bleeding Skull-Fish. Abruptly the sunken-eyed fish turned and fled back to their dark headquarters. One of them would never fight again.

One-Gill and her band quickly turned to their new supporters and asked each one to join their anti-Skull-Fish squad and help plan another attack. Before they left, One-Gill turned to the fish on the garbage work team. "Tell the others just what has happened here. The Commune will help you organize a strike against Five-Spots!" As the Commune fish left they cried out together: "Death to Five-Spots, Death to his Skull-Fish! Join the Commune to crush the Owner-Man's poison!"

These slogans caused a great deal of debate among those fish who liked the way the Commune had attacked the Skull-Fish in broad daylight. "I don't think they should say that Five-Spots is so tied up with the Skull-Fish," one would complain. "Five-Spots is the one fish who can stop the Skull-Fish by declaring that they are hurting the work on the tube. We need him."

"Nonsense," another fish would answer. "Has he ever done anything that would curb the growth of the Skullers? He has always protected them. Now he needs them more than they need him."

Another fish would declare, "It is a mystery to me what those Communers mean by smashing some 'Owner-Man's poison.'"

"I have heard them say," still another would answer, "that the only way to finally clean up our lake is to destroy the Owner-Man at the factory. They don't think getting rid of Five-Spots or even the Skull-Fish will end our troubles. The Owner-Man's poison will just create more Skullers and Five-Spots. Just put us back where we started. They want us to attack the Owner-Man in the factory."

"Impossible."

"Well, hard, but not impossible." On and on the debate would go. The attacks continued also. One day the Skull-Fish would be on the offensive and bring some terrible suffering upon the lake. The next day the Commune would respond with an ever-increasing boldness and make the Skull-Fish pay a terrible price. Each time the Commune forces seemed to grow in number. More and bigger meetings were held all over the lake as fish began to realize that they only had two choices – either accept the misery imposed on them by Five-Spots and the Skullers, or join the Commune and fight to destroy the source of the poison.

Five weeks after the three friends had first talked to the hawk, the Commune-Fish called for a Great-School. This was to be a demonstration in which all their supporters would swim together to show how much they had grown.

Fish were excited! It looked like it would be a show down. Five-Spots responded by declaring all Great-Schools in the lake illegal. "This order includes any demonstrations by the Skull-Fish, too," he said smugly. "We must obey the law and the police at all times, he added, glancing at the big sunken-eyed fish floating next to him. There was no mistaking Five-Spots' eyes. They were now the same dark pools that made the Skull-Fish so ugly. His assistants also showed only shadows where their eyes should have been.

In the days leading to the Great-School, the Skull-Fish increased their attacks on fish suspected of being in the Commune. Two nights before the showdown, one of Five-Spots' assistants got a tip from a weak fish who was terrified of getting hurt. He told the assistant that One-Gill was at a neighbor's home rock, holding an illegal meeting. The assistant thanked the fish and promised to reward him well for the information. An hour later, One-Gill and her friends were suddenly surrounded by twenty Skull-Fish.

A furious fight broke out, but One-Gill and her friends were greatly outnumbered. All were finally taken away. In the morning, seven sticks carrying their sad message were found pushed into the mud in the spot where the demonstration was to begin the next day. Those brave friends were gone, but the response across the lake was not one of sadness. Anger spread across the lake like a wave from a stone crashing into the water. Fish who had not yet spoken out against Five-Spots now loudly declared that they would be at the Great-School demonstration. The Skull-Fish dared not enter the very-populated areas of the lake. When they went anywhere, they traveled in groups of ten or more. Bande of young fish would taunt the Skull-Fish at every opportunity. "Sunk-eyed sandworms – you're going to die!" they would shout, and dart away laughing.

When the big day arrived and the first rays of sunlight hit the lake, One-Fin-Gone and three others cautiously approached the area where the Commune members had called for their supporters to gather. In the distance they could see the dim shapes of many fish. As they swam closer, they could see that these fish swam in three circles, one above the other. The ugly shadows across their faces revealed that these were Skull-Fish!

"Just as we feared," said One-Fin-Gone, motioning the others to stop. "The Skullers are trying to stop the demonstration by occupying our starting point."

"We will have to use our 'many springs make a river' plan," said the fish next to her. "Look below their formation – aren't those a lot of stakes driven into the mud?"

"You're right," answered One-Fin-Gone. "But I don't see any skulls on them."

"Not yet."

"Not ever," One-Fin-Gone shot back angrily. "Let's get back and report to the others."

"I would guess there are about fifty or sixty Skullers there," said One-Fin-Gone to the seven other fish who formed the leadership of the demonstration. "Probably they have more waiting by the pipe as a surprise backup if a fight breaks out. Still, if half our fish turn out, we should be able to keep them from attacking us." It was no secret that One-Fin-Gone had been arguing for turning the Great-School into an all-out attack on the Skull-Fish this day. Other leaders were not so sure that their supporters were ready for such a fight.

We have fighting schools with experience all over the lake," One-Fin-Gone had responded. "The fish in each club have friends who know the ideas of the Commune and respect us. I think we underestimate how far the fish will go if we give them the opportunity for a mass attack." The last planning session agreed to decide the question when they could see how many fish turned out and what their spirit was.

The 'many springs' plan foresaw that the Skull-Fish would beat them to the gathering point. Spot-on-Top called upon the club leaders to gather up their members two hours early and spread out along the east bank of the lake. When all the Commune schools were present, Spot-on-Top gave the signal and all the fish began to chant loudly, "Death to the Skull-Fish!" and "Owner-Man's Poison Got to Go!" As these fish passed over the home rocks of other fish,

they would call upon them to join the Great-School. After the crowd had gotten about halfway to the area where the Skull-Fish were gathered, Spot-on-Top called the other leaders of the demonstration over for a quick meeting. "How many are here?" he asked Spots-on-Belly.

"I would say about forty fish. My guess is that about one in five fish have joined us since we started."

Spot-on-Top thought for a moment and then said, "Not as many are joining as we had hoped. But still, it is not a bad turnout." The chanting rose around the little meeting. "Fish, Mice, Birds, and Man, the Commune's Got a Fighting Plan! Same Poison, We Want to Fight – Trout and Catfish Must Unite!"

One-Fin-Gone was excited. "Fish will join us when it looks like we are serious about tackling the Skullers today! I say we go ahead. Let's at least go to where we can see them and their damned stakes. We are sure to pick up at least another thirty or forty fish before we get that far. As long as we all stay together the Skull-Fish won't dare attack our demonstration."

"We can decide to back off if we haven't picked up enough support by then," said Tail-Fin-Torn.

Many fish watched the Great-School from their home rocks. The column was passing through a very populated area of the lake, and the spirits of the chanters rose. The sight of Catfish and Trout swimming together, fighting for the same goal – caused a great deal of controversy among the onlookers.

"How can Catfish swim with those Trout after all they have done to us," a young fish said bitterly.

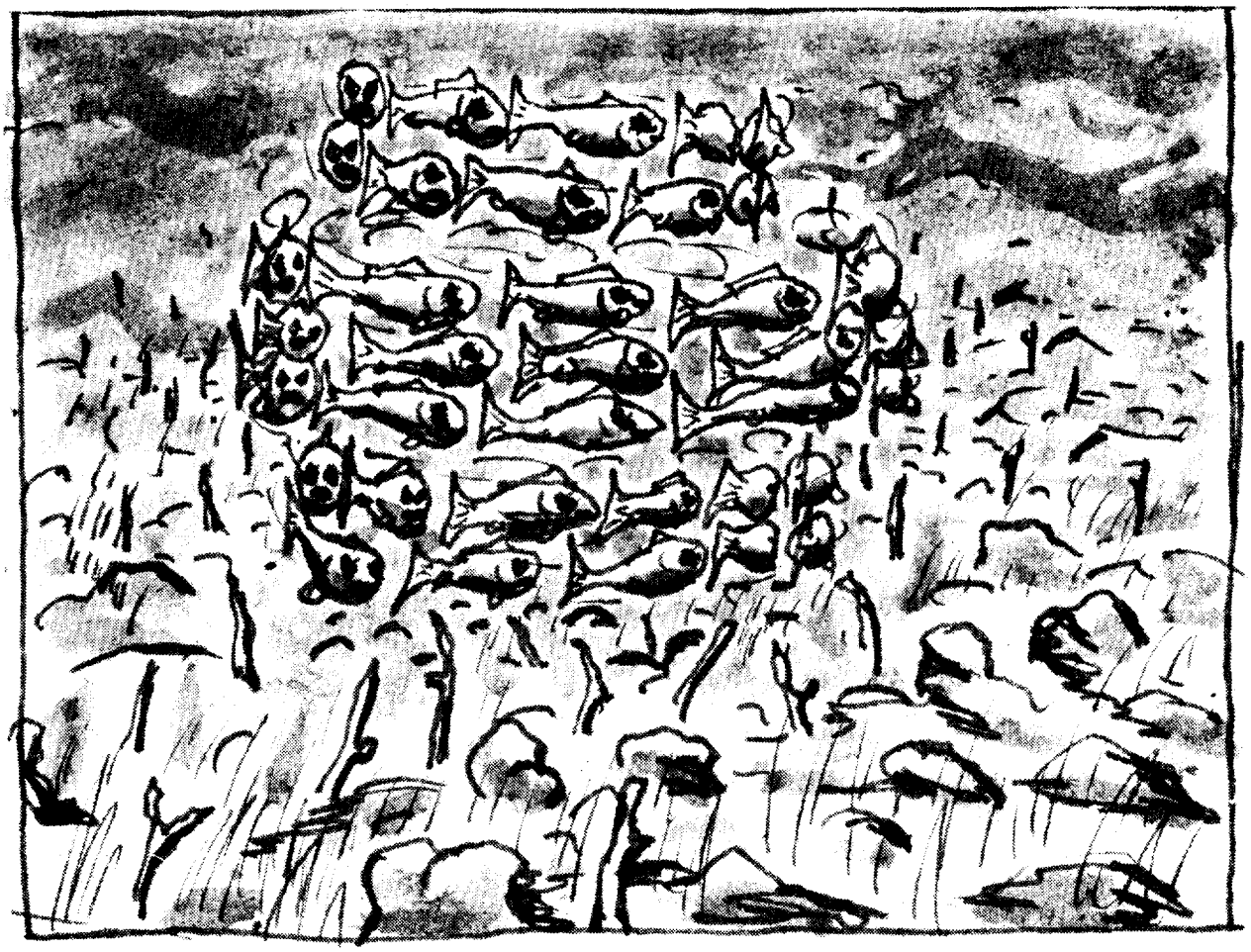
"Well, we never got anywhere by ourselves," said an old fish. "If those Trout want to work with us against Five-Spots, I say good."

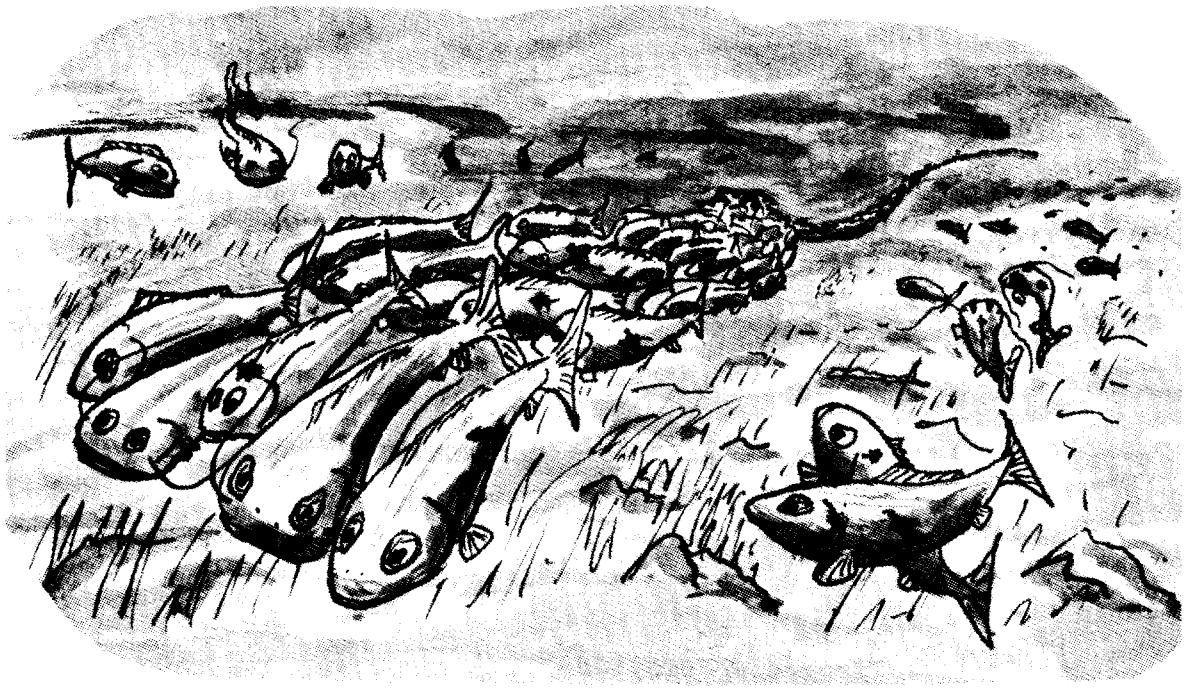
"I can't see why they shout about joining with Catfish to get rid of the poison," said another young fish. *Those* fish just get in *our* way to get more bugs."

"I don't know about that," said an old fish who had worked for a while on the barricade. "We seemed to be getting somewhere when we all worked together on the tube. But now all we do is fight each other while there are less bugs for all."

"I like the way they look!" said still another young fish, who darted off into the middle of the demonstration.

Suddenly, the front of the line could see a mass of fish shapes headed toward them. The





Skull-Fish were attacking! As had been rehearsed many times, the Commune leaders quickly called to fish around them to stay together. There was some confusion as some timid fish bolted away, but within a minute the Great-School pulled itself into a large ball with every fish facing out, teeth bared. The chanting had stopped. Only the shouts of the leaders could be heard. Spot-on-Top looked to One-Fin-Gone and said firmly, "Start up a chant while I get the leaders together." "Death to the Skull-Fish," roared One-Fin-Gone as Spot-on-Top left.

The Skull-Fish by now had formed a wide band circling the demonstration. It was apparent that the sunken-eyed killers outnumbered the demonstration three to one. In a moment they would tear into the ball of fish opposing them. Their encirclement seemed to be an attempt to frighten the many onlookers away. To make that point, ten of the Skull-Fish broke away from the circle and chased after three young fish who had ventured close. As the ten turned to return one of them savagely bit into an old fish who had watched them with cold eyes. Two other fish rushed in to pull the old fish away, but were forced back by the Skull-Fish. Suddenly the ten killers were confronted by seven fish from the neighboring rocks. A fierce fight broke out, and more Skull-Fish left their circle to help control the crowd that threatened to join in.

Just then Spot-on-Top returned with Tail-Fin-Torn. "We have to fight now!" said One-Fin-Gone. "Let's go," he agreed. Spot-on-Top turned to the Commune leaders, who were all waiting in position for a signal. He raised his fins for quiet. There was a pause, then he waved his tail-fin and the ball of fish suddenly expanded out to the band of Skull-Fish. One bite on the startled Skullers and the Great-School again formed a tight ball.

Immediately the entire area was boiling with thrashing fish. After five minutes, it looked bad for the Commune fish. Most of them had two or more attackers on them at once. Blood began to darken the churning water. Both sides were getting hurt. Only the demonstration's tight formation kept each fish from being bitten from the back and sides. The Skull-Fish were forced to face teeth each time they moved in to attack. Those fish not actually fighting a fish kept up the chant of "Death to the Skullers". The fighting and chanting could be heard halfway across the lake. Spot-on-Top, Tail-Fin-Torn and One-Fin-Gone stayed together to give some overall guidance to the fight. "We are greatly outnumbered," said Spot-on-Top. "Get ready to order a retreat."

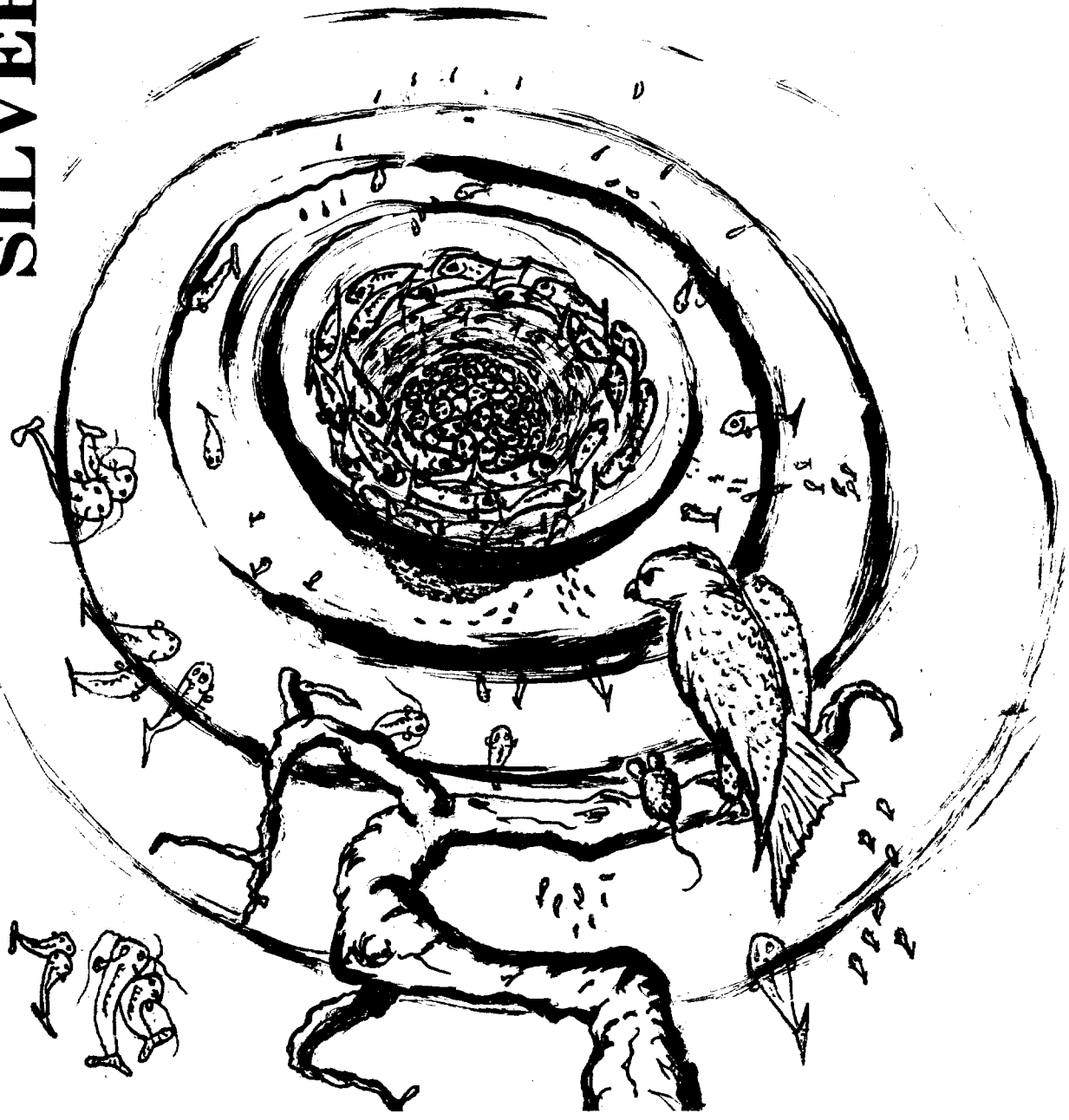
But even as he spoke, some of the Skull-Fish that had been attacking his position turned around suddenly in pain. One-Fin-Gone caught a glimpse beyond the wall of Skull-Fish to see a number of fish darting around the rear of the attacking Skull-Fish. One-Fin-Gone called to her club to break through and join those outside the encirclement. They did so, and soon the chant of "Death to the Skullers" rose loudly from that side of the wall of Skull-Fish. The tide of the fight began to turn. Fish were rushing from all ovcer to get a bite of Skull-Fish.

SILVER-FIN LAKE

The Skull-Fish were fighting attackers on both sides, and they were no longer a majority. Three of them that had been badly chewed up suddenly broke from their circle and ran. Others saw them and followed. Then as quickly as the fight had started, it ended. The only sunken-eyed fish who remained were those who could no longer swim. The Commune fish had won but only because their numbers had swollen to well over hundred and fifty. Without hesitation, Spot-on-Top called upon all within the sound of his voice to join the Great-School and let the entire lake know of their victory over the Skullers. By the end of the day, the winding school was a hundred fish long and five fish abreast.

We must now leave our friends in Silver-Fin Lake, even though we know it cannot be the end of their story. None of their problems have been resolved. They still live in even more poison than before. They face a murderous threat from Five-Spots and the Skull-Fish, who have only temporarily retreated to the tube side of the lake. But we must break off our story because the truth is that we don't know how it will end. We many know how we would like it to end, and we can guess how it could end in disaster. But right now, we just don't know which way things will turn out for our friends.

In some ways we can say that all the work to clean up their lake has only left them worse off than before. But such a view would be very one-sided. The fish can see important changes for

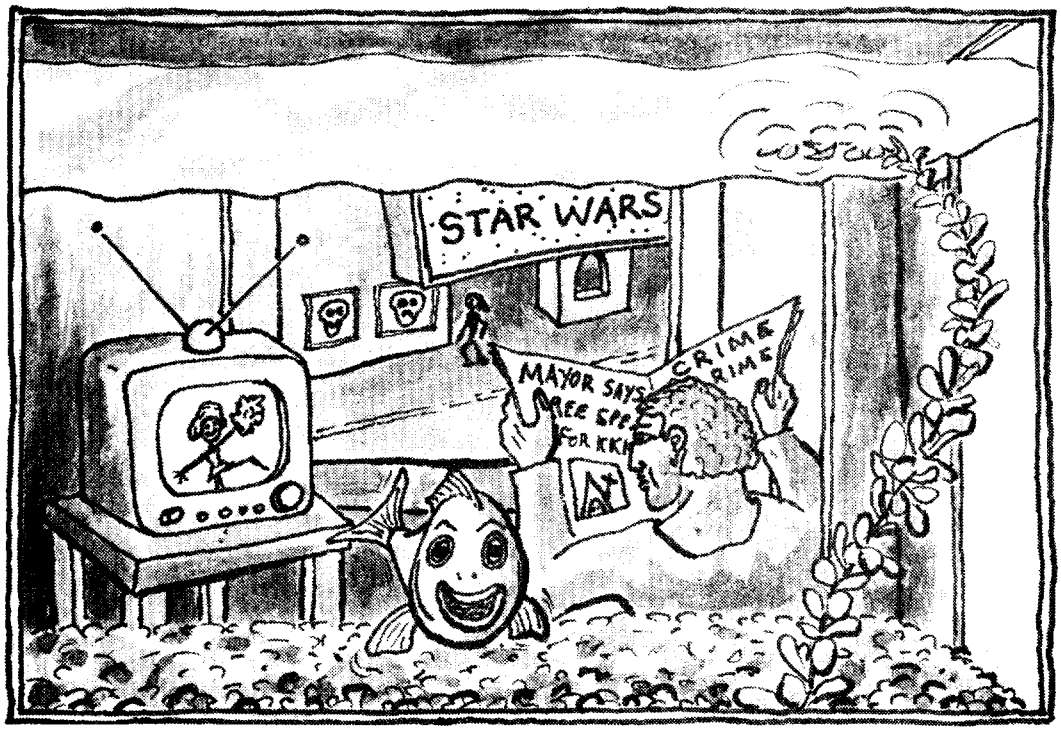


the good in their turbulent world. Where before no fish knew they were being poisoned, now many fish can see the evil stuff all around them. They are no longer ignorant of an unseen enemy. Many know exactly that it is the poison created by the Owner-Man that is the cause of their misery. They now know *what* to fight. This is an important beginning.

As we have seen, it was only in the course of their fight to clean up their lake that they came to understand their real world. But even more important, the struggle of our friends led them to create the only weapon that can destroy the Owner-Man. The Commune, which unites all those who are victims of the Owner-Man's greed, has the strength to reach out of the lake and crush the source of poison. So we can say that the fish of Silver-Fin Lake are now living in a better world than before Spot-on-Top talked to the owl. True, the poison is thicker and has turned some fish into vicious defenders of the poison. But the knowledge of poison gained in the struggle, and the existence of the Commune, gives the fish their first opportunity to overcome all obstacles.

The stage is now set for the final conflict. Will our friends take the path that leads them to victory? Or will they stumble into one of the many pitfalls that crowd their future? They have the goals of the Commune to light their stormy path. But the Commune is not an easy beacon to follow. There are other lights along the way that seem brighter. Brighter if only because they lead nowhere. Still, with friends like One-Fin-Gone, Spot-on-Top and One-Gill, who are so willing to fight for what is right, how can they fail? And there are many more such friends eager to join the struggle. Right?

Perhaps the next time you notice a drain pipe running into a river or lake you will step up closer and see what is going on underneath the surface. Follow the tube back to its source. Could it be that some tube is pumping poison into your world?



Dedication

To K., who inspired this story by asking if each of us is not to blame for the selfish ideas we harbor. Through class struggle can we understand ideological poison and cure its victims. This story is for those who strive to build decent lives amidst the fiery collapse of bourgeois "civilization." We must face their rotten ideology of greed and destroy it. Only then will we be free to build the first truly civilized culture.

Author's Note

The author of this story is a West Coast postal worker and member of PLP. The drawings were done by him, his daughter and friends. He writes:

This story was written for my 14-year-old daughter. We were debating who was responsible for having sexist and other bad ideas. Was it solely the individual, or the system that is to blame? This story grew out of a two-page analysis of fish in a polluted pond. Was each fish guilty for being sick? Then I gradually added ideas about how to fight ideological poison. Would a simple reform work? No. As the poison thickens, reform work fails and fascism develops. The idea of a Party comes to the fish from outside the lake as the only way to get at the source of the poison. The story tries to include the main reasons why people should join PL. I tried to include in the story a lot of struggle over the kind of arguments about revolutionary politics that I hear on my job. I rewrote the story several times while getting comments from both Party and non-Party friends. The style is simple because it started as a story for a teenager. Hopefully it can be read by all ages as an introduction to the Party's ideas.

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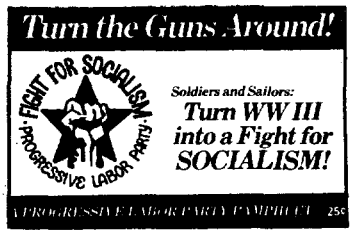

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